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WEDNESDAY 12 AUGUST 1998

(1850p) 45p

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Police plan UK-wide roadblocks

POLICE FORCES across the United Kingdom will join together next month to mount the biggest ever road-block operation in an attempt to drive thousands of dangerous vehicles off the road and capture hundreds of criminals, alcohol smugglers, illegal immigrants and benefit cheats.

The one-day operation, codenamed Mermaid, will be staged by 52 police forces in conjunction with immigration officials, benefits agency inspectors and customs officers, who will be waiting at the roadside to question suspects.

But, she said: "Most people won't know what their rights

BY IAN BURRELL
Home Affairs Correspondent

are when they are being questioned and will be far too alarmed or scared to refuse. We would be happy to advise anyone who has been a victim of this abuse of power."

In a smaller version of the operation in June, 1,988 vehicles were stopped and 113 people who said they were on their way to work were found to be in receipt of unemployment or sickness benefit. The operation is believed to have saved £176,000 in false benefit claims.

A benefits agency spokeswoman said the tactic was extremely successful. "The police

officer will stop the vehicles and our fraud officers will ask the people for their name, national insurance number and any benefits they are claiming."

Operation Mermaid, which is backed by the Association of Chief Police Officers, began in 1995 and has mushroomed as more police forces have recognised its effectiveness in trapping dangerous vehicles. This year, all forces in England, Wales and Northern Ireland will take part in the exercise with an unprecedented amount of support from other government agencies.

It is co-ordinated nationally by a West Midlands police traffic intelligence officer, Bob Nockalls, who said the road-blocks should properly be called "road checks". PC Nockalls said the fears of civil libertarians were unfounded and that Mermaid "will remain a road safety operation". He added: "People are in no way detained for anything other than road traffic matters. Whilst they are in that check then people like the benefits agency will speak to the occupants. Nobody can make anybody speak to the benefits agency."

are obliged to act, and if illegal immigrants or contraband goods are found in a vehicle then the other agencies can be quickly called in while police continue with safety checks.

It is hoped that all drivers who are stopped can be dealt with in half an hour.

PC Nockalls said: "The great majority of people we check are perfectly legitimate people."

Random Mermaid checks are carried out by local forces at different times of the year. In total, 93,000 drivers have been stopped, leading to 673 arrests and 5,500 vehicles being banned

from the road. On one occasion, a rocket launcher and ammunition were recovered.

One recent exercise in Surrey by the Metropolitan Police led to eight arrests, of which five were for immigration offences. One man was arrested for giving false information to police, another was in possession of an offensive weapon and another was the subject of an arrest warrant.

Thirty-five of the 404 drivers stopped were reported for benefit fraud, 27 vehicles were banned from the road, and 112 drivers were fined for having invalid tax discs.

Giant merger for BP fails to dispel gloom

BY MICHAEL HARRISON

THE WORLD'S biggest industrial merger was unveiled yesterday as BP agreed to take over the US oil company Amoco for \$119bn (£68bn). The deal also turns BP into Britain's biggest company.

However, the record breaking merger failed to halt the slide in world stock markets. More than 22bn was wiped off the value of shares in London as dealers panicked over the impact of the Asian crisis.

The merger of the two oil giants will lead to 6,000 job losses from their combined workforce of 100,000. But Sir John Browne, chief executive of BP Amoco, pledged that the number of redundancies in the UK would be "very small".

BP Amoco will have sales of \$107bn, more than 23,000 petrol stations, and will rank as the world's third biggest oil company, just behind Shell and Exxon.

The merger was hatched in the strictest of secrecy over the last six weeks under the codename Project Eagle, with BP referred to as Bear. The deal was signed yesterday morning in BP's Britannic House headquarters in the City of London.

BP Amoco has promised to lift profits by \$2bn (£1.2bn) in the next two years through efficiency measures. Boardroom salaries will be linked to this target. But there could be an immediate pay bonanza for top executives in the American company who are sitting on 40 million share options worth \$2bn.

Sir John described the deal as an "alliance of equals", but it is a takeover. BP shareholders will own 60 per cent of the enlarged company and BP directors will account for a majority of seats on the company board.

The company will have its headquarters in London and its primary listing will be on the London Stock Exchange. The brunt of the 6,000 job cuts are

expected to complete the merger by the end of the year.

Last night, City analysts were predicting that the surprise merger would trigger a wave of consolidation in the world oil industry as smaller players such as Texaco and Mobil get together to fight the challenge posed by BP Amoco.

BP has just under 17,000 petrol stations worldwide which will remain under the BP brand name, except in the US where they will be converted to Amoco stations.

The merged company will have combined reserves of 13 billion barrels of oil, and daily production of 3 million barrels. It will be the largest oil producer in the North Sea and the US. BP Amoco will also become the world's third biggest chemicals company behind Shell and BASF of Germany.

BP and Amoco employ about 17,000 people in the UK. Sir John said there would be some job losses, but these are expected to be in the hundreds.

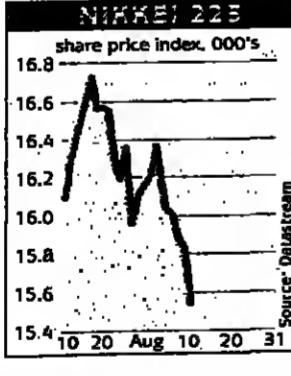
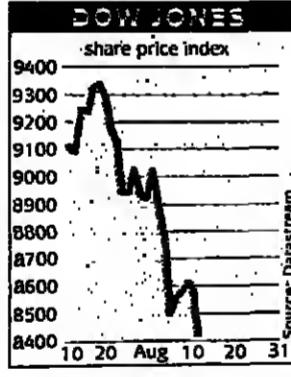
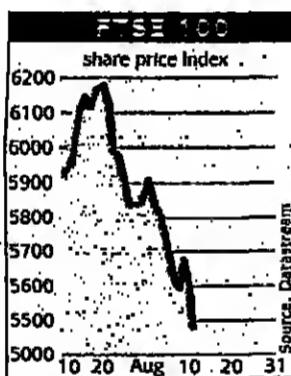
Other redundancies were announced yesterday with BOC confirming that 500 jobs would go in Surrey and Sussex, and Royal Ordnance announcing 200 job cuts. Meanwhile, the Confederation of British Industry added to the gloom by reporting that manufacturing industry was in recession in every region of the country.

There was also a deepening sense of impending disaster on the world's stock markets.

The FTSE 100 Index fell 154.8 points to 5,423.8 points – its lowest level for six months. The index of Britain's top 100 companies has now fallen by more than 10 per cent in less than a month.

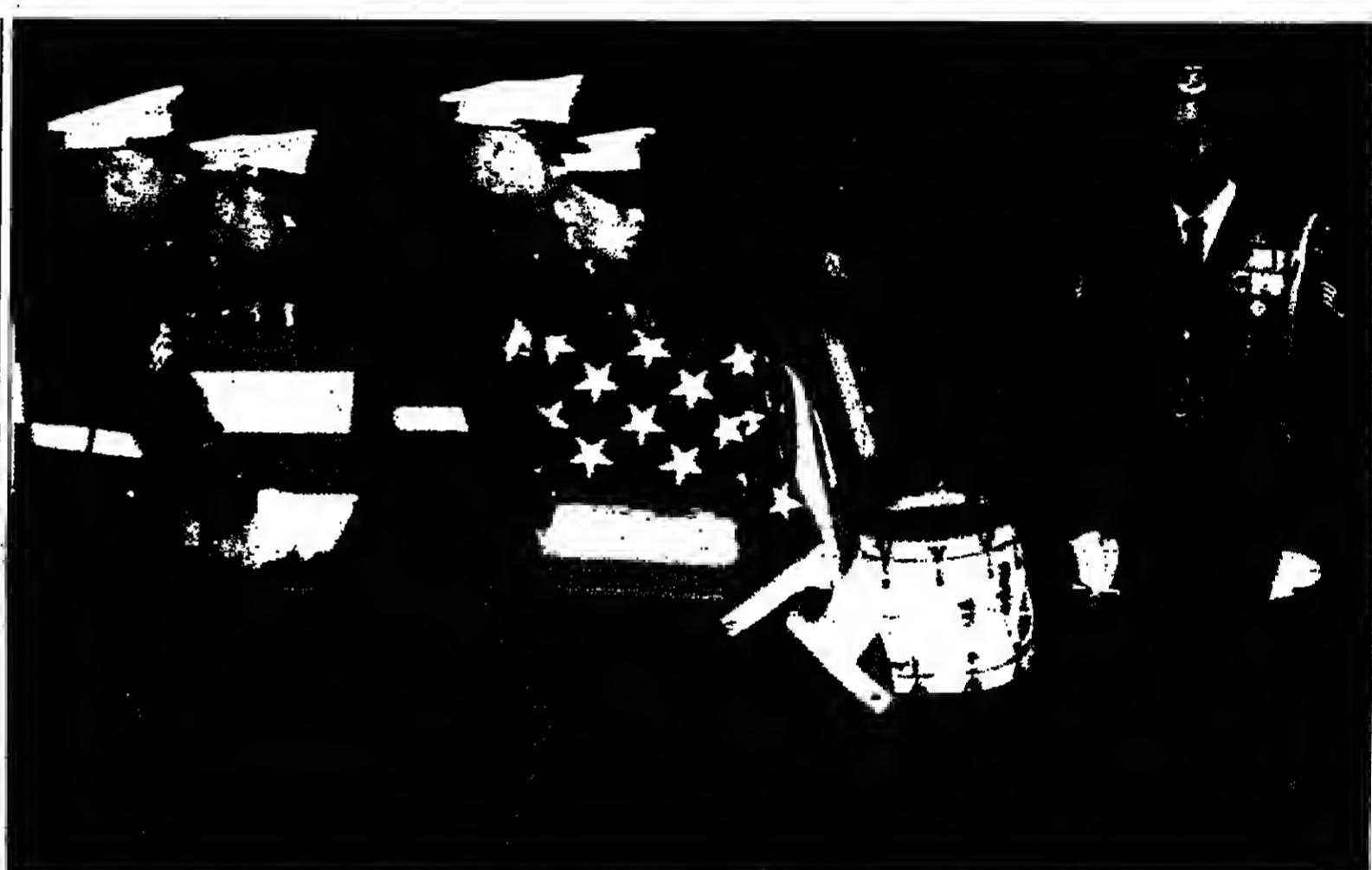
Meanwhile, Wall Street was also taking a battering. The Dow Jones Industrial Average was down by more than 250 points – a fall of more than 3 per cent – with less than two hours' trading to go in New York.

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Markets tumble, page 15



expected to be in the United States.

Dealers have not ruled out the possibility of a counter bid for Amoco. But there is a "poison pill" clause in the agreement with BP which means that if either side pulls out of the merger it has to pay the other \$1bn (£600m) compensation. BP and Amoco claimed there would be few regulatory obstacles to the deal and said they



The body of one of the victims of the Nairobi bombing arriving at the US base in Ramstein, Germany, on its final journey to the US. AP

Kenya may sue US over bomb

KENYAN lawyers say that they plan to sue the United States for negligence in the wake of the bomb attack on the American embassy in Nairobi, amid criticism in the country that the US has only looked after its own victims.

The Law Society of Kenya said it had decided to seek the advice of international law experts on possible action. There are no precedents for such a move, but George Kegoro, the Law Society secretary, insisted

BY MARY BRAID
in Nairobi

that the allegations of lax security around the embassy could provide grounds for negligence charges.

The embassy was a target for terrorists. Knowing that, the US still kept the building down.

There have been reports of poor security, including

claims that the embassy guards

were warned four days before

the bomb that men were video-

ing the building. The society would have little trouble finding complainants if a legal avenue is open.

The death-toll is expected to exceed 230, and 5,000 people were injured. Many victims were the breadwinners for large families. Kenyan companies have also been badly hit: the business area around the embassy was devastated.

The Law Society's determination to pursue legal action is influenced more by emotion

than by a realistic estimation of its chances of success. Mr Kegoro said Kenyans were furious at the way the Americans had focused resources on US victims, a complaint rejected by the US ambassador to Kenya, Prudence Bushnell. Mr Kegoro said: "Twelve American lives seem to have been a million times more important than 200 Kenyan lives. What sort of moral standard is that?"

President Daniel arap Moi said that in its own suffering, the US had lost touch with the suffering of others.

The International Committee of the Red Cross yesterday launched an appeal for victims.

The question of who should pay the medical bills will be a thorny issue.

In Washington, a State Department official said that any claims for compensation from the families of Kenyans who died in the bombing were "the last thing on our minds just now".

Anthony Hopkins gives £1m to Snowdon

SIR ANTHONY HOPKINS is to make a £1m donation to the National Trust towards its purchase of Snowdon.

The actor's gift, announced with delight by the Trust last night, goes a long way to meeting the £3m-plus price of the two mountain estates, one including the 3,500ft summit, which the Trust agreed to buy last week.

BY MICHAEL McCARTHY
Environment Correspondent

trist, Dr Hannibal Lecter, he is to receive a fee of £1m.

Although now resident in California, he was born in Port Talbot in Wales and has for some years been president of the National Trust's Snowdonia Appeal.

Snowdon is one of the most beautiful places in the world and Snowdon is the jewel

that lies at its heart," Sir Anthony said. "It must be cherished and protected ... I am very pleased that I am able to offer this support."

The Trust was "totally overwhelmed" by Sir Anthony's generosity, Richard Cuthbertson, chairman of its Committee for Wales, said last night.

Later this month, the Trust

said, the actor will make a trip to Snowdon to see the estates.

The Trust has another 93 days to find the purchase price – thought to be about £2.5m – of the Hafod-y-Llan and Gelli Fago estates on the southern flank of the mountain, which it agreed to buy from Richard Williams, whose family has farmed the land for 14 generations.

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Fears spark call for raw milk ban

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Israel grudgingly opened the way to negotiations for an international treaty banning the production of fissile material for atomic weapons. Page 10

Australia gets another state

Australia's Prime Minister announced plans for Australia's vast Northern Territory to become the country's seventh state on 1 January 2001. Page 11

UN to rescue Afghan aid workers

The UN launched an operation to fly aid workers from Afghanistan to safety in Pakistan after the Taliban pushed further into opposition-held territory. Page 13

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Sedgwick raises pensions bill

Sedgwick has increased the amount of money set aside for settling pensions mis-selling cases to £80m. Page 14

BOC cuts 5,000 jobs worldwide

Industrial gases group, BOC, is axing 5,000 jobs worldwide in a bid to improve profitability and shield itself against a trading slowdown. Page 15

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British rugby league plan fails

Rugby Football Union negotiators blamed their Welsh counterparts for the collapse of a plan to launch a British League. Page 24

Reds still chasing £16m Yorke

Manchester United are not giving up on their pursuit of Dwight Yorke, despite the price tag of £16m demanded by Aston Villa. Page 24

WEDNESDAY REVIEW

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'When customers are sold inappropriate pension schemes or other financial products, the blame should be directed at the board of directors.' Page 3

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Recycled paper makes up 62% of the paper used in the UK.
Recycled paper makes up 62% of the paper used in the UK.

BY DAVID MCKRITTRICK
Ireland Correspondent

that the commission, as presently envisaged, is inadequate for the task of safeguarding human rights issues. Now based at the UN in Geneva, Mrs Robinson enjoys

huge personal stature in Ireland. Last year she stepped down after seven years as the most popular president in the country's history.

In private letters to Tony Blair and the Irish Prime Minister, Bertie Ahern, Mrs Robinson has asked the two governments to consult her on giving extra powers to the new Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission.

In the letters, copies of which have been seen by *The Independent*, Mrs Robinson cautions that the credibility of the new body could be undermined if its powers are not more clearly defined.

The letters, while couched in the most diplomatic language, make unmistakably clear the ex-president's view

briefly and in fairly broad terms". She says there must be guarantees of its independence, adequate resources and specified powers of investigation into patterns of alleged abuses and individual cases.

Her letters to the two prime ministers conclude: "I attach great importance to the aspect of the agreement and to the responsibility my mandate requires to assist your government in its implications. I would therefore ask you to consider my comments and liaise with me."

The new commission, which may come into being later this year, will replace an existing advisory committee which has in the past made many recommendations on human rights to the government, most of which have not been acted on. Legislation setting out the Commission's

powers to investigate alleged

brief is making its way through Parliament at the moment.

Mrs Robinson's concerns reflect a widespread feeling in the often influential human rights lobby both within Northern Ireland and internationally, that the new provisions may not go far enough in dealing with the human rights issues which are certain to persist in Northern Ireland.

Similar points have been made to the Government by participants in a high-level seminar in Belfast last month, among them the heads of five public bodies. A letter despatched to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Mo Mowlam, said those at the seminar felt strongly that changes were needed to ensure the commission would be effective and credible.

They said it should have powers to investigate alleged

human rights abuses and to undertake any of its functions on its own initiative. They added that it should be an independent body with adequate resources.

The US Speaker, Newt Gingrich, arrived in Belfast yesterday in search of information on the Northern Ireland peace process; details of his family's Irish roots and, possibly, presidential votes.

In the course of a seven-day stay, north and south, he is meeting a wide range of political parties. Mr Gingrich is a right-wing Republican, but his main message yesterday was that he is completely behind Mr Clinton's sponsorship of the Good Friday deal.

Mr Gingrich is also visiting a genealogy Centre to chart the course of his family's history. He noted that a third of US politicians had Irish roots.

Police check public at random

BY IAN BURRELL
Home Affairs Correspondent

able inroads in the battle against organised crime.

Alcohol smugglers have been caught driving unroadworthy vehicles. Businesses that employ illegal immigrants have been found to be fiddling their taxes. Suspected terrorists have turned out to be benefit cheats.

But the success of such an exercise depends largely on the effectiveness of the dragnet used to bring the multi-agency investigators into contact with the public. The most popular method, the police road block, has long been a sensitive issue with civil libertarians.

But by ditching the traditional rivalries that have dogged relations between police, customs and tax investigators, law enforcement agencies have made consider-

able inroads in the battle against organised crime.

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After the IRA bombing campaign in the City of London, po-

lice mounted a series of road blocks to restrict the movement of suspect vehicles - the Ring of Steel. The police recently indicated that it intended to continue with the Ring, not because of the renewed threat of bombing, but because the road checks had been successful in detecting other criminals.

Chief constables now feel confident to press the Government for greater powers to carry out what would effectively be random breath-testing.

The Department of Transport, Environment and the Regions, is expected to support such powers, which could see operations being mounted to test drivers outside car parks.

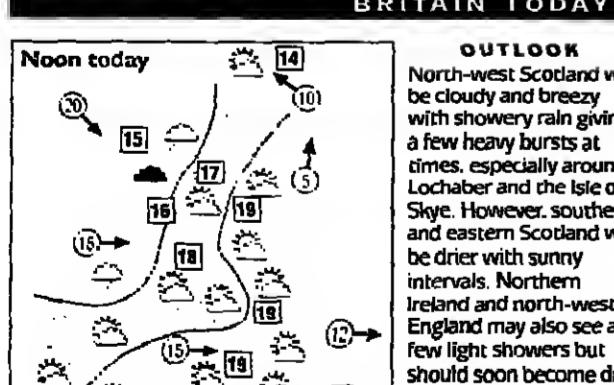
After the IRA bombing campaign in the City of London, po-

lice are conducting road safety checks, police have become aware of other forms of criminal activity. As a result they have invited other agencies to be present, including Customs & Excise, the Vehicles Inspectorate, Benefits Agency, the Health & Safety Executive, the Driver & Vehicle Licensing Agency, trading standards, the

Contributions Agency, the Immigration Service, and the Environment Agency.

Liberty, the human rights group, is planning a legal challenge to the multi-agency questioning. Meanwhile, other authorities are embracing the tactics. When the immigration service mounted an operation at Alton Towers leisure park it was accompanied by police and investigators from the Department of Social Security. Customs officers have realised that many contraband smugglers rely on unemployed workers and ageing vehicles. Benefit agency investigators and the Vehicles Inspectorate have been used to enforce even greater penalties.

BRITAIN TODAY



Thursday will be much fresher across all parts of the UK, but it will remain fine over the bulk of England and Wales. Scotland and Northern Ireland can expect a few showers however, with steadier rain arriving in the Western Isles again towards evening. On Friday, Scotland and most northern and western areas will be overcast, with rain or drizzle. South-east England may turn hot and humid at the same time however.

LIGHTING UP TIMES

BRITISH ISLES WEATHER

Most recent available figure at noon local time.

KEY: C: cloudy; Cl: clear; Fl: flurries; F: fog; H: haze; M: mist; R: rain; S: sunny; Sh: shower; Sk: snow; Th: thunder.

HIGH TIDES

AM HT PM HT

London 0524 7.4 1506 9.3

Liverpool 0423 9.8 1506 9.3

Aberdeen 1100 13.3 2323 13.3

Cardiff 0952 9.0 2225 8.6

Dover 0412 3.7 1559 3.5

Dun Laoghaire 0253 4.4 1529 4.0

Height measured in metres.

SUN & MOON

Sun rises: 0541

Sun sets: 2245

Moon rises: 1104

Moon sets: 2058

Last quarter: August 14

WEATHERLINE

For the latest five-day forecast dial 0891 5009.

Followed by the two digits for your area, indicated by the above symbols.

Office: Calls charged at 50p per min at all times (inc VAT).

THE WORLD YESTERDAY

Akrotiri S 32 90 Frankfort S 32 90 Naples S 31 88

Alexandria S 31 88 Francois S 32 90 New Delhi C 34 93

Algiers S 31 88 Gibraltar C 27 81 New Orleans S 32 90

Alcatraz C 32 81 Harare C 21 82 New York S 28 82

Amsterdam C 32 81 Jeddah S 31 84 Paris S 31 89

Antarctica S 33 91 Hong Kong S 26 79 Nicolsie S 32 91

Antwerp S 33 91 Honolulu S 31 89 Oslo F 21 70

Auckland S 17 63 Islamabad Q 22 72 Paris S 36 97

Azerbaijan S 44 111 Islamabad Q 22 72 Peking S 32 90

Bahrain S 31 88 Istanbul F 31 86 Paris S 32 90

Bangkok S 28 82 Jeddah F 31 86 Paris S 32 90

Barbados S 30 85 London S 28 82 Paris S 32 90

Beijing S 29 84 London S 28 82 Paris S 32 90

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Berlin, West S 32

Censorship: Campaigners accuse Home Office of hiding report on eve of recess to avoid embarrassing Labour Time to relax porn laws, says censor

JAMES FERMAN, the nation's film censor, published his final report yesterday and recommended a wide-scale relaxation of pornography laws.

Mr Ferman, who has been director of the British Board of Film Classification for 23 years, has recommended loosening Britain's pornography laws, giving greater freedoms to filmmakers in a new "R18" category and rejects giving morality campaigners a right to appeal against censors' decisions.

The report is bound to anger Jack Straw, the Home Secre-

BY PAUL MCCANN
Media Editor

tary, whom Mr Ferman accused of being puritanical and "playing to the gallery" earlier this year.

The Home Office is obliged to present the report to MPs and placed a provisional copy in the House of Commons library on the final day before the Parliamentary recess began.

Morality campaigners claim the Government tried to stifle debate about the report by not arranging an answer to a Par-

liamentary question to alert MPs to its existence.

The Home Office maintains it gave a Parliamentary answer that the report would be laid before Parliament in the same week. The report is published in full today by the BBFC while most MPs are on holiday.

Criteria for a new R18 cer-

ificate are set out in the report in detail for the first time. The new category will allow a classification to be given to scenes of homosexual and heterosexual intercourse and group sex.

Mr Ferman also writes that

"too strict" pornography laws have created a flourishing black market in violent pornography.

"As we enter a new Millennium," writes Mr Ferman in the report, "we must find a solution to the problem of pornography which will not go away. The law has been applied by police and magistrates in too strict a manner to allow the material the customers want. Thus we are left with a flourishing black market which mixes pornography with obscenity."

The BBFC wants the li-

censing of sex shops to be tightened while allowing them to sell more explicit material so that the demand for hard-core pornography dries up.

However, Jonathan Bartley, spokesman for the Movement for Christian Democracy, claims the new R18 certificate will not go away. The law has been applied by police and magistrates in too strict a manner to allow the material the customers want. Thus we are left with a flourishing black market which mixes pornography with obscenity."

Adding to Mr Bartley's anger is the report's an-

nouncement that the BBFC has decided not to give chil-

dren's groups a right to appeal about a film's classification.

"Only the film industry currently has the right of appeal," said Mr Bartley. "In March the new president, Andreas Whittam Smith, announced that he was in principle in favour of such a right of appeal. Now it's announced that a panel of children's rights groups will only be able to consult. It won't have any teeth."

Mr Ferman will leave his position as arbiter of British good taste in December after 23 years at the BBFC. He has fol-

lowed an increasingly liberal line because of his belief that the BBFC's job is to classify, not to censor if possible.

In the report he maintains that the need for strict controls has lessened since his appointment in 1975. "No subject matter should any longer be taboo," he said. "Times have changed and governments and public authorities must ensure that any remedy is not disproportionate to the mischief it is designed to cure."

Campaigners hoping that

Mr Straw will use Mr Ferman's

retirement to put a more conservative figure in charge of the nation's censors may be disappointed. Mr Straw had a say in the appointment this year of Andrew Whittam Smith, former editor of *The Independent*, as president of the BBFC, but Mr Ferman's successor will be appointed by the new president. Mr Whittam Smith showed his liberal credentials earlier this year when he gave a certificate to a new film version of Nabokov's *Lolita*.

Leading article,
Review, page 3

Film's 'soaking wet liberal' with a dry side

NEW YORK-BORN James Ferman once said that he was inspired to move to England because we have "a nice comfortable culture here and we should protect that". In the minds of many, the outgoing director of the British Board of Film Classification has done no such thing.

Critics have rubbished 67-year-old Mr Ferman for being nothing but a drowning-wet liberal. Both *Lolita*, which deals with a man's relationship with an underage girl, and *Natural Born Killers*, a cinematic murder spree, were given the green light under his regime. And *Crash*, David Cronenberg's film in which perverts are shown getting sexual pleasure from car crashes, was passed uncut with an 18 certificate. One critic described *Crash* as "beyond depravity", but Mr Ferman managed to extract a positive message, which was: "not to have promiscuous sex".

While always maintaining that children are influenced by what they see on the screen, Mr Ferman felt justified in passing a film called *Kids* featuring adolescent and prepubescent sex. Proof that the actors involved in simulated sex scenes were over 16 years seemed to satisfy his censor's eye.

But the mild mannered Mr Ferman is unapologetic about his cuts—or lack of them. "They [his critics] seem to think that we are the pioneers of the permissive society, but we are in fact the strictest film censors in Europe," he says.

Last year, after 22 years in the job, he came to blows with the Home Secretary, Jack Straw, over his move to relax censorship of pornographic videos. He accused Mr Straw of "pandering to the puritanical vote".

Mr Ferman was born in New York to a film director father and a mother who was a teacher. His interest in film dates back to his boyhood, when he learnt the old-fashioned skills of splicing and trimming from his father, who had worked with the great DW Griffiths.

BY CLARE GARNER

In the Fifties he took an English degree at King's College, Cambridge, where he met his wife Monica. He was playing Benedick to her Beatrice in a production of *Much Ado About Nothing*. They now have two children and live in Hampstead, north London, and prefer a good night out at the theatre to a trip to the flicks. Among his other pastimes at Cambridge was, ironically, writing for *Varsity* under the editorship of Michael Winner.

His professional life began in television, with a traineeship at ATV's Armchair Theatre. He went on to become a staff director at ATV before moving to freelance work, notably with the BBC. His television documentary *Drugs and Schoolchildren* was used as a training film for teachers in the 1970s and 1980s and led to him gaining a lectureship in community studies at Central London Polytechnic. He is involved in a drug rehabilitation centre called Cure and is chairman of the Standing Conference on Drug Addiction.

In 1975 he became secretary of the British Board of Film Censors, which then became the British Board of Film Classification. On arrival at his offices in Soho Square, he was shown a college campus film in which a pretty student was seen getting into the shower: "the camera enjoying her body," as he puts it, "and suddenly you saw the distorted face of a man through the glass and a knife slashed across her breasts and I leapt up out of my seat and screamed. My fellow examiners, male and female, said: 'Sorry, we see these all the time. They're called slasher movies'."

Although he sees more violence in a week than most of us experience in a lifetime, he still finds himself "appalled" by the hatred for women he finds in the cinema. In his first full year, 1976, he saw 402 films, 58 of which included rape.



James Ferman famously accused Jack Straw of "pandering to the puritanical vote" for refusing to relax censorship of pornographic videos

FOUR FILMS THAT MADE THE CENSOR WOBBLE

Natural Born Killers

Oliver Stone's film was so violent that Quentin Tarantino was unhappy with his credit for the screenplay in the film's title. However, his tale of Mickey and Mallory Knox blazing a trail across America, killing more than 50 people, was released uncut after a three-month delay and even went out on video with an 18 certificate, to the horror of the then home secretary, Michael Howard. The BBFC rejected press claims that the film had inspired 10 "copycat" killings.



The Exorcist

The 1973 tale of satanic possession was withdrawn from video stores when the BBFC took over video classification in 1984 and refused it a domestic licence. The film's demonic themes and vision of a sexually explicit 12-year-old have proved too much in subsequent applications, thanks, in part, to scares about Satanic abuse. James Ferman was particularly worried about its effect on young women. It is being looked at again by the BBFC's new president Andreas Whittam Smith.



Child's Play

Along with other classics of the splatter-fest genre like *Driller Killer* and *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, *Child's Play* was described as a video nasty. The 1984 Video Recordings Act was a direct response to a tabloid campaign against "video nasties". The campaign in turn was a reaction to the fact that the VHS revolution allowed obscure underground horror films to find their way on to the shelves of suburban video stores.



Crash

This was David Cronenberg's film version of JG Ballard's novel about a couple who get an erotic thrill from car crashes. The book could be treated as a highbrow look at society's enslavement to the car and a reaction to the death of Ballard's wife in a car crash. The film, however, was described in terms of weird, individual sex acts and a newspaper campaign was whipped up against it. The film was released uncut after the film censor decided that it was neither illegal nor harmful.

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City will set up red-light district

IN AN effort to try and control the world's oldest profession, police and politicians are planning to set up a tolerance zone for prostitutes.

In what would be the first officially-sanctioned red light district in England, councillors in Middlesbrough are working with police to set up a controlled area where prostitutes could work.

The move has come amid growing concern from local people that prostitutes in the city are slowly moving from their traditional areas and are soliciting for business in residential districts.

Those involved in the tolerance zone scheme realise it is a high-risk strategy and that they could face criticism for giving the green light to the red lights.

"We are coming from the perspective that you are never going to get rid of prostitution," said Supt John Tough, of Cleveland Police.

"We are saying let's try and see if we can keep it in areas away from the residents. There is a risk, of course, but I think that doing nothing is not an option. We have a duty to the people of Middlesbrough."

While the idea for tolerance zones is not new, they have never been successfully operated in any of England's cities. In Sheffield, such a plan was halted after opposition from the business community. In Edinburgh, where under Scottish law there is no offence of kerb-crawling, a tolerance zone has been operating for more than three years.

Superintendent Tough and members of Middlesbrough City Council recently visited Edinburgh on a fact-finding mission. Yesterday they reported

BY ANDREW BUNCOMBE

their findings. "I was actually very impressed by what we found. There is an area away from houses where the prostitutes operate, where the police know they will be and where health and safety workers can talk to the women," said John Richardson, Middlesbrough's environment director.

"There is also a degree of self-policing. If underage girls appear in the controlled zone, the women inform the police through a liaison officer.

"As a result, when you walk through Edinburgh you don't see any prostitutes and there is no problem for residents or tourists."

The next stage of the Middlesbrough project will be to find an area in the city which everyone could agree to. It is also essential the plan has the support of the city's prostitutes and Supt Tough has had several informal meetings with them at drop-in centre.

They also need to convince the business community that trade and property prices will not be affected.

Stephen Hood, Teesside area manager of the north east Chamber of Commerce, said: "If the site selected for a controlled area of prostitution is a business area, it would be unfair that local businesses should bear the brunt of what is, after all, an illegal activity."

Many residents are behind the project. Liz Chambers, a housewife who has seen the residential Union Street area of Middlesbrough taken over by prostitutes, said: "I think the whole thing should be legalised, but if not, this could be the best way of dealing with the problem."



Deana Moore embraces a friend after the London funeral of her mother, Eva Bartok, a Hungarian-born film star and a former lover of Frank Sinatra Ruis Xavier

Unfit policemen use CS gas to make 'easy' arrests

MIDDLE AGED police officers are using CS spray to make "easy" arrests rather than going to the effort of normal restraint methods, the head of the Police Complaints Authority has warned.

Peter Moirhouse, chairman of the PCA, has also spoken out against the use of CS sprays to incapacitate mental patients, despite Home Office and chief constables' backing for the practice.

There is growing unrest about the widespread use of CS sprays and an increasing number of people are using the police, claiming they have misused the sprays.

Mr Moirhouse, in an interview with *The Independent*, said: "I'm afraid that there's a tendency for it [CS spray] to be used to ensure an easy arrest.

The hand-held CS spray has been increasingly used by police to quell disturbances. An estimated 100,000 officers now have the spray nationally.

Mr Moirhouse said he was worried that it was being used in unsuitable places, such as confined spaces and that victims were not being treated quickly enough.

The use of CS spray against the mentally ill has caused particular controversy in the past few weeks with health professionals and civil liberty groups urging the police to stop using the spray on psychiatric patients.

This followed a survey that showed more than one-third of NHS mental health trusts had treated people sprayed by police.

Lord Williams of Mostyn, a Home Office minister, and the Association of Chief Police Officers last week defended the use of CS against mentally ill.

However, Mr Moirhouse said: "It does not sit comfortably

with the normal members of the public that CS spray is being used on people who are temporarily or permanently disadvantaged. No more would you want to see CS spray used on old people or children. It seems an unsuitable weapon to be used in mental hospitals."

At PCA's inquiry, it was found that police used CS spray on a 26-year-old mentally ill man shortly before he was found dead in the attic of his home.

CS incapacitates victims, causing intense pain, especially around the eyes and can cause blistering and affect breathing. High levels have also been linked to heart attacks. There are additional risks if the person affected suffers asthma or other breathing problems, is taking medication, and is also restrained.

IN BRIEF

Inner city streets are still the burglar's favourite beat

HOMES IN the country are almost three times less likely to be burgled than those in inner cities, says the latest British Crime Survey. Only 3.9 per cent of households in rural areas were burgled in 1995 compared with 10.3 per cent in inner cities and 6.3 per cent in other urban areas.

Bomb disposal expert killed

LT-COL Mike Watkins, 51, an Army bomb disposal expert, died yesterday when earth collapsed on top of him during an operation to clear unexploded devices from First World War tunnels at Vimy Ridge, northern France.

Irish hauliers threaten ship race

HAULIERS have threatened traffic disruption on routes to the port of Dublin when the Tall Ships race reaches the Irish capital later this month. A series of work stoppages are being planned by the Irish Road Haulage Association over a range of grievances over conditions in the port.

Campaigners to storm Faslane

Anti-nuclear campaigners from around the world claimed they were preparing to storm Britain's largest nuclear submarine base at Faslane in a bid to disable the Trident weapons system. The "Ploughshares" said they plan to cut through the fences into the submarine base.

£31m boost for arts in Scotland

SCOTTISH ARTS received a £31m boost from the Government yesterday in an attempt to help restore service levels in national museums. The package includes £16m in new money. Some £7.7m will be spent supporting the arts, including theatre.

Tall order for tribunal

A TRIBUNAL has reserved its decision in the case of two men who claim they were turned down for jobs as chicken-pickers because of their height. Lincoln Dodd, 6ft 7in, and Barry Sale, 6ft 5in, were told they may suffer back problems if they started working at Sun Valley Foods in Hereford.

Nuclear rail shipment suspended

RAIL SHIPMENTS of radioactive waste from a nuclear power station were suspended yesterday after a contaminated flask was discovered. The giant tank was being shipped from Hinkley Point 'B' nuclear power station Somerset, to Sellafield in Cumbria.

KEN LIVINGSTONE

"Given the chance, people have the unerring ability to produce results that confound the spin doctors"

—THE WEDNESDAY REVIEW, PAGE 4

Mental health watchdog calls for new guidelines

BY ROGER DOBSON

about aspects of its use in these circumstances, some of which the commission shares. The time is right for an informed discussion amongst all interested parties to consider, among other things, whether additional national guidance would be helpful."

It is understood that the commission will take the lead in organising talks which are likely to involve the Department of Health, the police, Home Office and others.

Margaret Pedler, head of legal and policy development of the mental health charity MIND, said: "We're very much welcome this move and we hope very much that we will be invited to be involved in the

talks. We have been saying all along that there are concerns and that CS spray is being used in circumstances which we believe to be inappropriate."

Yesterday *The Independent* revealed that the Police Complaints Authority had confirmed the use of CS gas by police on two mentally ill people, one whom was found hanging when police broke into his loft where he had escaped to, and a second man who jumped through a window after being sprayed and was critically injured.

It was disclosed last week that a team at The Maudsley Hospital in London, one of Britain's leading psychiatric units, had found that CS spray was being regularly used on the mentally ill. In some cases it

had been used on hospital premises.

That report says that the police in a number of areas are using the gas to subdue mentally ill patients before taking them to hospital or a clinic.

In some cases police have used gas on patients after they have been admitted to NHS premises, say the researchers, who also warn that the hazards of using the gas on people who are already taking anti-psychotic medication are unknown.

One in three of the 100 NHS trusts who took part in the survey reported the use of CS spray on patients brought into hospital by the police or in some cases on hospital premises. Some had even gone to the lengths of acquiring antidotes to CS.

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One Old Master, two artists and three auctions. The story of a saleroom farce



FOR NEARLY 40 years, the painting hung above the piano in the drawing room of Robin Duthy's home. Unsigned and untitled, it featured a peacock surrounded by chickens and geese. It was thought to be by Aert Schouman, an 18th century Dutch artist.

In 1993, Mr Duthy decided to sell the painting, which his father bought in 1956 and bequeathed to him on his death. The grand and striking picture had blended perfectly with his parents' Tudor mansion, but was too large for his own more modest home.

He contacted Christie's auction house in London, which was a natural enough step. Little did he realise that he was setting in train a remarkable sequence of events - a tale of one painting, two artists and three vastly different prices.

Rachel Mauro, the first Old Masters expert who viewed the work, said that it was almost certainly by Melchior d'Hondecoeter, a 17th century Dutch artist known as "the Raphael of bird painters". She said it would fetch £40-60,000.

Three others - Gregory Martin, head of the Old Masters section at Christie's, and two Dutch consultants, Sam Segal and Fred Meijer - disagreed. They thought it was probably by Pieter Casteels III, a lesser-known Flemish artist of the 18th century, and worth £20-30,000.

The sale went ahead with the picture "attributed to" Casteels, meaning the auctioneers were not entirely sure of its provenance. It was bought by Richard Green, a major London dealer, for £28,000.

And that might have been that, had it not been for the fact that Mr Duthy is not an ordinary punter. He runs a company that charts art market sales and even works for Christie's as a consultant.

Picking through a Christie's catalogue two years later, he was taken aback to come across a familiar work of art.

"There, to my amazement, was the same painting for sale, with an estimated value of £40-60,000 and the full attribution," Mr Duthy said yesterday. "In other words, they were say-

By LOUISE JURY AND
KATHY MARKS

ing that they were now certain that it was by Casteels."

The same four experts had revised their opinion of his heirloom, which was bought by a Belgian collector, Leon Seynave, for £48,000.

"I was upset, very annoyed," said Mr Duthy.

Last May, his heirloom came under the Christie's hammer once again. This time it was sold in New York, and this time it was attributed to the "circle of Melchior d'Hondecoeter". It fetched £29,000.

The auction house declined to discuss Mr Duthy's case yesterday.

But experts and dealers say it illustrates the pitfalls facing would-be collectors - particu-

larly in the Old Masters market, where a huge proportion of works are unsigned and undocumented.

Alex Bell, head of Old Masters at Sotheby's in London, said it could be difficult to be certain of the authorship of a work. He said that the circumstances in which a picture is seen can make considerable difference.

"We're trained to think about these things, of course. But the attribution on a painting with an explanatory notice in a museum is probably believed. In a dirty attic covered in decades of grime and bad varnish, it may be harder to spot the masterpiece."

"A lot of the best-known artists - like Titian, Rembrandt and Van Dyck - are the biggest challenges," he said.

The nature of art scholarship means that there are often experts on lesser known artists where it is feasible to produce a monograph in perhaps four years of a PhD. But for big names the auction houses can't turn to a single person. Even then, the experts may be abroad and dependent on photographs to try to decide.

Technology has helped. It is known when certain pigments were first created and used, such as Prussian blue in about 1710-1712. "If there's Prussian blue in a work supposed to be by Van Dyck who died 60 years earlier then it can't be Van Dyck," Mr Bell said.

Rembrandt has been well served by an extensive project in Holland which used ultra-violet light and X-rays, counted the strands on a canvas and examined the wood in his known works. One of the consequences, however, is that there are now thought to be perhaps 350 Rembrandts in the world compared with up to 1,000 at the beginning of the century.

Alex Bell believes it is possible to get the problem out of perspective. Italians rarely signed their works and as much as four-fifths of the paintings produced between 1300 and 1800 may have no signature. But from the 17th century, Flemish and Dutch artists increasingly did.

MASTERS OF THE ORIGINAL

- A painting was sold at a country house sale in 1995 for £155,000. After extensive renovation it was revealed as *The Sack of Jerusalem*, a 17th-century work by Nicolas Poussin, worth £8m to £12m.
- *Venice, View of the Grand Canal with Santa Maria della Salute* was thought to be by a follower of Luca Carlevaris. Only when it was hanging for sale did Sotheby's identify it as by Carlevaris himself. Six months later it made 20 times its previous estimate.
- A work thought to be "just a French 17th-century painting" was revealed as an early landscape by Poussin worth £2.35m, which had been in the collection of the 18th-century British master Sir Joshua Reynolds.
- *A Boy Drinking* was sold for £209 in Somerset in 1984. A London dealer, Derek Johns, bought it for £5,500 and then sold it for nearly £1.5m, by which point it had been identified as by Annibale Carracci.

LOUISE JURY



The painting of the peacock (left) was too large for Robin Duthy's (above) modest home in Stoke Newington

Neville Elder

Navy man admits to selling secrets

BY ANDY GALES

A NAVAL chief petty officer is facing a possible jail sentence today after he admitted breaching the Official Secrets Act.

Steven Hayden pleaded guilty to "without lawful authority [making] a damaging disclosure of a document relating to security or intelligence which was in [his] possession by virtue of [his] position as a Crown servant". His case was sent by the Old Bailey for sentencing by the Chief Stipendiary Magistrate, Graham Parkinson at Bow Street Magistrate in central London.

The court was told that Hayden sold information for £10,000.

Outside the court his solicitor said the chief petty officer had sold details of an anthrax threat to Britain by Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein to the Sun newspaper.

Hayden, 38, from the Portsmouth area, is still serving in the Royal Navy but has since been moved from his previous post and was serving on HMS Nelson.

He said that a lot of the cash was spent on household luxuries, and an additional amount paid for the funeral of Hayden's second child, who had died at birth. The money was stored in a brown envelope in a wardrobe at Hayden's house because it was claimed that it would rouse suspicion if he began to use the money to pay off all of his debts.

Hayden was granted bail on

the conditions that his passport remains with the Royal Navy, that he does not talk to any members of the press and that he resides at his home address.

Passing the case to the Old Bailey for sentencing, Chief Stipendiary Magistrate Mr Parkinson said that the public must expect an offence of this nature to be given a "sentence which reflects the gravity of the offence".

He ordered a series of pre-sentence reports which were to be written before Hayden was sentenced at the Old Bailey for an offence which carries a maximum prison term of two years.

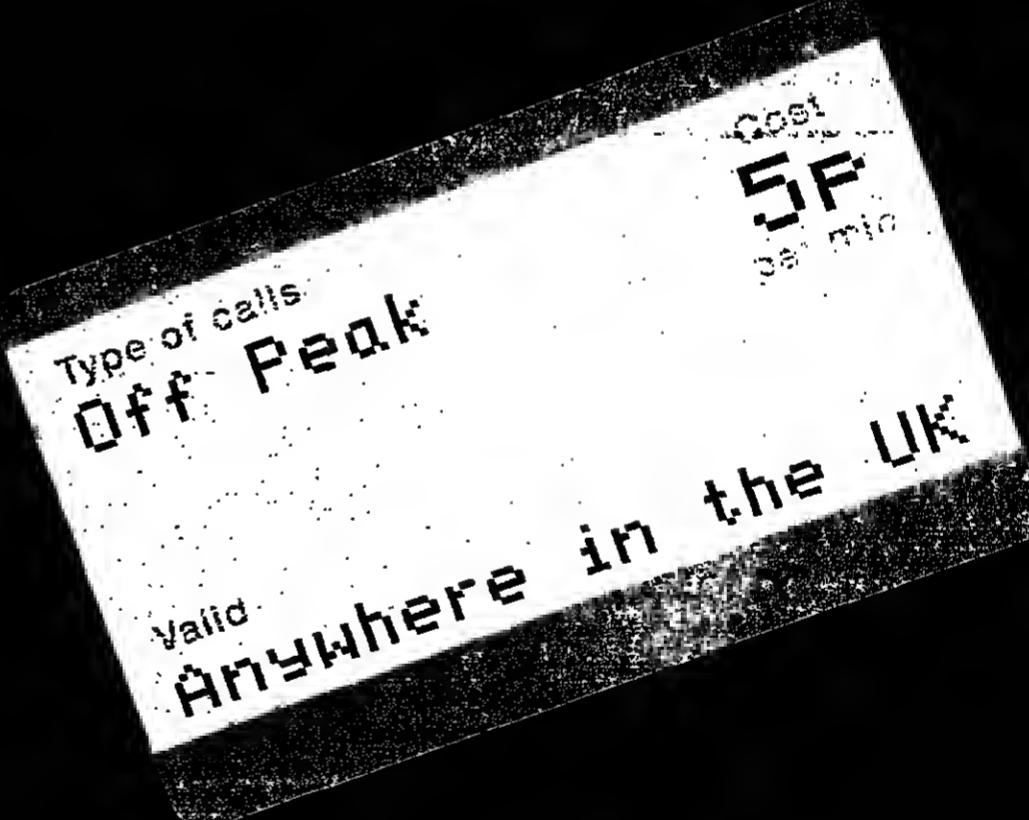
After the hearing Mr Lancaster made a brief statement outside the court and said that a number of "crucial personal issues" relating to his client would be brought before the sentencing court.

He said: "Having pleaded guilty to selling information to the Sun newspaper, my client is still bound under the restrictions of his bail from talking to the press."

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Taxmen censured for accepting gifts

COLLEAGUES OF corrupt taxman Michael Alcock enjoyed lavish overseas trips and hospitality from the suspects they were sent to investigate, according to the Government's spending watchdog. The National Audit Office reports today that five other senior tax inspectors have been disciplined following an internal inquiry into Alcock's activities.

The senior tax inspector was sentenced to five years in prison last year after an Old Bailey jury found him guilty of

BY PAUL WAUGH
Political Correspondent

six counts of corruption. The trial heard that he had accepted £150,000 and the services of a prostitute in bribes from the wealthy Arab businessmen he was supposed to investigate.

Sir John Bourne, head of the NAO, found that although there had been a tax loss of £130,000 in one of Alcock's investigations, the total potential loss could be much higher, but many files were incomplete

and it was impossible to establish a final figure.

Sir John found that Alcock was not alone in acting fraudulently and revealed that five other tax inspectors had accepted excessive hospitality such as holidays abroad. Three were demoted, with salary cuts of up to £8,000, while two others were given formal warnings.

Other members of staff were under suspicion but insufficient evidence was available for disciplinary proceedings.

Alcock, 47, headed the

"Ghosts" team, a section tasked with tracking down "ghosts", or figures who had never registered for tax. Police found he had been corrupted by the wealth around him and had indulged in fraud on a "breath-taking scale", receiving air decks, holiday accommodation and cash from taxpayers.

In a report to Parliament published today, Sir John found that weak management controls and naive assumptions about the honesty of tax inspectors had created a culture where

corruption could exist undetected. He welcomed steps by the Inland Revenue to tighten up its anti-corruption measures, but warned that further improvements had to be made.

He recommended that periodic staff surveys should be conducted and managers should be trained in spotting tell-tale "warning signals" in an employee's behaviour. Any member of staff exhibiting an extravagant lifestyle, financial problems, unusual gifts, regular excuses for performance

and rule-breaking should be closely watched, he said.

"The Alcock case has had a significant impact on the reputation of the Inland Revenue for fairness and honesty and has also damaged morale," he said.

"In response, senior management in the department have committed substantial time and resources to investigating what went wrong and to strengthening internal controls within the Special Compliance Office. If the improved controls are applied actively and consistently, and further action is taken in response to our recommendations, the risk of corruption should be substantially reduced."

A spokesman for the Inland Revenue said it was considering the recommendations contained in the NAO report. "The report recognises that the control environment now in place, following the changes made by the department, provides the framework for much firmer control than the regime under which Mr Alcock operated."



Michael Alcock: Jailed for five years for corruption

Quarter of all nurses come from overseas

BY GLENDA COOPER

ONE in four new nurses in Britain is now recruited from overseas while the number of those entering the profession has fallen to its lowest level since records began, the regulatory body warned yesterday.

Nurses' leaders said the Government faced the worst crisis in nurse shortages in 25 years as nurses "voted with their feet" to shun the profession because of increasing workload and erosion of pay.

Worryingly, the statistics from the United Kingdom Central Council of Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting (UKCC) show that young people are increasingly turning away from nursing - for the first time more than half of those on the register are aged 40 or over - which exacerbates future shortages.

The UKCC figures follow a "boffice" fall in nursing recruits revealed last week by the English National Board for Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting. It said that in the past four years the number of nurses in training had dropped by more than 8,000 - a decline of 15 per cent.

The ENB said the decline put in jeopardy the Health Secretary's promise in last month's Comprehensive Spending Review to give the NHS an extra 15,000 trained nurses and 6,000 training places over the next three years. In response, Frank Dobson said he would be recommending nurses' pay should rise to combat the recruitment crisis.

The UKCC figures show that the number of nurses on the register has fallen by 30 per cent over 10 years. It is particularly acute in midwifery where almost half work part time with only 32,803 practising in total.

Initial entrants to the register stand at 16,382 compared with 17,954 in the previous year and 22,164 in 1990/1. But more than a quarter of this number is now made up of numbers of nurses from overseas.

OVERSEAS TOTALS

Nurses newly registered	
Australia	1,170
New Zealand	472
Finland	402
South Africa	393
Ireland	348
Canada	203
Sweden	171
Germany	146
USA	143
Nigeria	130

Total percentage of foreign nurses

	Total percentage of foreign nurses
Australia	27
New Zealand	10
Finland	9
South Africa	9
Ireland	8
Canada	5
Sweden	4
Germany	3
USA	3
Nigeria	3

While Australia remains the largest single overseas source, numbers of nurses coming from Finland were sharply up. Other countries which supplied many nurses included New Zealand, Canada, Sweden, Germany and Ireland.

The rise in admissions to the register of overseas nurses reflects the increasing pressure under which hospitals and trusts are working as they are forced to look abroad to fill nursing vacancies," said Christine Hancock, general secretary of the Royal College of Nursing. "This is a fire-fighting measure, not a long-term solution."

Fewer than one in seven nurses registered is aged over 30 and the percentage of those in their 30s is falling for the third year running. A quarter of registered nurses will therefore be eligible for retirement by 2000.

Louise Silverton, deputy general secretary of the Royal College of Midwives, said the figures were even worse for midwives, with one in six midwives aged over 50 compared with only one in 12.5 under 30. "With the current figures it

will be practically impossible to provide one midwife to one woman in labour which is the least that every woman deserves," she said.

Particularly worrying was the trend for midwives to work part time while the birth rate had not gone down. "This supports evidence from the heads of midwifery that the workload of individual midwives is increasing almost to breaking point," she said. "It is hardly surprising that given these tensions, together with the continued erosion of midwives' pay, the midwives are voting with their feet."

A spokeswoman for the Community Practitioners and Health Visitors Association said she was "not in the least surprised" by the UKCC findings after the way health visitors had been treated.

"Nurses are still being treated like children by the NHS. They do not have a proper voice," she said. "They will tell you it is not that it is unattractive but that it is unbearable to be a nurse."

"This is a double whammy for the Government," added Ms Hancock. "Not only are people turning their back on entering the profession but the average age of existing nurses is rising... This double dose of bad news has serious implications for nurse shortages which has a direct impact on patient care."

"The figures are low today because there was insufficient investment in nursing three years ago," said a spokesman from the Department of Health. "It takes three years to train a nurse and the impact of increased investment in nurse training in recent years is not reflected in the latest UKCC statistics."

The Government said that in 2001 and 2002 there will be 18,700 training places, an increase of 73 per cent. It claimed that, under the last government, nurse training places had dropped to 10,849 in 1994 and 1995.

NATIONAL NO-SMILING DAY



A member of a small, straight-faced group holding a banner among the crowds on the Royal Mile in Edinburgh this week as part of the city's Fringe Festival - Review, page 11

David Cheskin/PA

Oftel losing the 'David and Goliath' battle

UNDERFUNDING and poor training have left telephone regulator Oftel unable to protect customers in its "David and Goliath" battle with the big telecommunications firms, MPs warned today.

The Commons Public Accounts Committee said that the watchdog had not been

proactive enough in rooting out anti-competitive behaviour in the phone industry.

While companies such as BT had vast resources and expertise to call on, Oftel lacked staff with commercial experience or knowledge of competition legislation. Even though anti-competitive behaviour often resulted in higher prices, poor service and less choice for consumers, only 10 per cent of the investigations were initiated by Oftel, the committee claimed in a report published today.

In 217 investigations into unfair competition between 1995 and 1997, just 8 per cent resulted in formal enforcement action. Worse still, just 18 of the watchdog's 180 staff worked on competition issues, the MPs said.

Committee chairman David Davis said that regulation could only be effective where the skills of the regulator matched those of the regulated.

"Since the industry has so many more resources than the regulator, the quality, experience and training of the regulator's staff are of paramount importance," he said.

"Such staff should be well

trained and include some who are familiar with the way commercial organisations work. In such 'David and Goliath' situations, we need to make sure that David is well-armed."

The committee also warned that it remained concerned about the price of BT's ISDN lines, increasingly common

phone connections that allow computerised information to be sent at high speed. A spokesman for Oftel said that its director general, David Edmonds, had already launched a review of all aspects of Oftel's organisation and funding which is due to be completed in early Autumn.

The guidelines say: "Children achieve more when schools and parents work together. Parents can help more effectively if they know what the school is trying to achieve and how they can help. Home-school agreements will provide a framework for the development of such a partnership."

The guidelines say: "Children achieve more when schools and parents work together. Parents can help more effectively if they know what the school is trying to achieve and how they can help. Home-school agreements will provide a framework for the development of such a partnership."

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Ramsden's buys local chippies

BY ANDREW BUNCOMBE

HARRY RAMSDEN'S, the chain of fish and chip super stores, is reinventing itself as...er...a chain of street corner chippies.

Having taken the art of mass-selling humble fried cod and potatoes to new levels with its bright and shiny 250-seater restaurants, the company is reverting to its traditional roots. From next year, the company will start to buy up chip shops in towns and cities around Britain and turn them into "Harry's Huts".

"We realise that we cannot have a 250-seater restaurant in every town and that sooner or later we will reach saturation



Grub's up at Harry Ramsden's in Edinburgh

point," said spokesman Neil Johnson. There are parts of Britain where it is impossible to get good fish and chips so we intend to acquire premises in those areas."

From bumble beginnings in 1928 with just one back street shop, Harry Ramsden's has be-

come the country's most successful fish and chip chain. It has 35 restaurants and opened its most recent, last June, in Dubai. There is already a restaurant in Hong Kong and in October a restaurant is due to open in Aberdeen.

Despite the encroachment of the ubiquitous hamburger, fish and chips remains big business in Britain. There are around 8,500 outlets and the industry is worth an estimated £650-700m. In 1995 300 million servings of fish and chips were eaten. "We think the move that Ramsden's are planning will be very good for the industry as a whole," said Ann Kirk, general secretary of the National Federation of Fish Friers.

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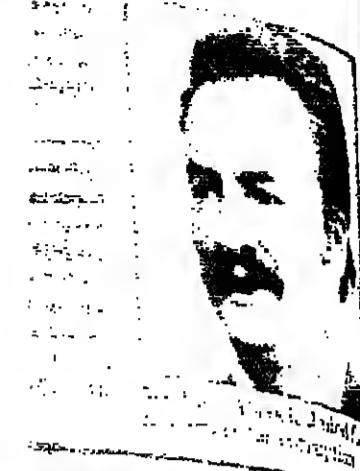
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Summer of discontent as jobs vanish

EXPERTS WARNED yesterday that the manufacturing gloom has spread from the British industrial heartland to all parts of the country, including the South-east.

The warning coincided with the announcement of substantial job cuts from three more manufacturers.

And Ministers were braced for further job losses in today's unemployment figures prompting Labour MPs, industrialists and trade unions to appeal for an U-turn to reduce interest rates and rescue manufacturing from recession.

BOC, the industrial gases group, said yesterday that it would cut 500 UK jobs, with the South-east bearing the brunt of the losses. Royal Ordnance announced that almost 200 jobs will go at its weapons plant in Nottingham; and Molins,

BY LEA PATERSON

which makes spare parts for cigarette machines, said that it would cut 260 jobs in Peterborough.

The Confederation of British Industry (CBI) predicted more job losses, and said manufacturers up and down the country were reporting falling orders and business optimism.

The CBI estimated that UK employment fell by 11,000 in the second quarter of the year, and forecast that another 16,000 jobs will go in the third quarter.

Sudhir Junankar, CBI associate director of economic research, said: "The regional survey shows the picture for manufacturing is tough across the entire country. The strength of the pound coupled with the downturn in domestic demand is having a

major effect on UK manufacturing."

For the first time since the last recession, manufacturers' orders declined in every region of the UK in the four months to July and orders are forecast to fall further over the next four months.

Manufacturers throughout the UK are gloomy about economic prospects, the one exception being Northern Ireland, where the peace process has injected a degree of optimism.

Dr Neil Blake, research director of Business Strategies, the consultancy which, together with the CBI, conducts the quarterly regional trends survey, said: "This is a marked turning point for many manufacturers with a double blow from domestic demand and export orders.

"Business confidence is low

RECENT MANUFACTURING JOB LOSSES

June	De La Rue, the banknote printer and credit-card maker, cuts more than 375 jobs. Its Gateshead plant bears the brunt of the losses.
July	Motorola warns of redundancies at its Scottish plants after it announces plans to axe 15,000 jobs worldwide.
August	Rover announces loss of 1,500 jobs. Siemens, the electronics giant, announces that all 1,100 jobs at its Newcastle plant are to go.

AA says it will close its 142 high street shops, with the loss of 850 jobs. Grove Worldwide, a US crane maker, cuts 670 jobs in Sunderland.

BOC, the industrial gases group, announces 500 jobs losses, mostly in the South-east.

Royal Ordnance cuts almost 200 jobs at its weapons plant in Nottingham.

Molins, maker of parts for cigarette machines, cuts 260 jobs in Peterborough.

and our estimates suggest that employment levels are already beginning to take the strain in a number of regions."

However, the CBI stopped short of forecasting outright recession. Mr Junankar said: "We

are expecting a sharp slowdown but we are not in the same position as the recession of the early 1990s."

Most City experts are agreed that there is still only a small chance of a recession in

the UK, largely because the services sector - which represents around 80 per cent of the economy - is still growing strongly.

BOC, Royal Ordnance and Molins yesterday became the latest in a string of manufacturers to cut UK jobs. On Monday, Grove Worldwide, a US crane maker, said it was closing its Sunderland plant with the loss of 670 jobs. Last month, Rover, the car maker, said it was cutting 1,500 jobs and Siemens, the electronics giant, said it was closing its Tyneside plant, with the loss of 1,100 jobs.

John Prescott, the Deputy Prime Minister, blamed yesterday's announcements on world economic problems as well as the high pound. He angrily rejected a suggestion that the Government saw job losses as a necessary price to pay

for fulfilling its long-term economic goals.

Ministers blamed world economic troubles and the Asian crisis for the turnaround in manufacturing. Stephen Byers, the Chief Secretary to the Treasury, said he hoped industry would realise it was "not being let down" by the Government.

But John Redwood, Tory trade and industry spokesman, said: "The CBI's manufacturing survey shows that manufacturing is collapsing fast. Peter Mandelson [Secretary of State for Trade and Industry] is becoming the minister for manufacturing collapse."

To date, the industrial heartlands of the Midlands and the North have borne the brunt of the UK's economic slowdown. The CBI's regional trends survey has been recording falling manufacturing orders in the

South-west and in Yorkshire

and Humber

and

cam

North-west and in Yorkshire

and Humber

and

cam

Guard grilled over bombing

BY MARY BRAID
in Nairobi

A KENYAN security guard who could hold the key to the identity of the bombers of the US embassy in Nairobi was yesterday being grilled by FBI agents.

The man, an employee of a private security firm contracted by the embassy, has told colleagues he was manning the entrance gate at the back of the embassy building on Friday morning when a pick-up tried to enter the compound.

"When the vehicle was refused entry, the driver threw what appeared to be a grenade," said Harun Sorobe, a manager with United International Investigative Services, yesterday. "In the confusion he ran away. The bomb went off soon after. He is lucky to be alive."

Mr Sorobe's account was cut short by a more senior member of UIIS, an American-based company which specialises in government security, who said the US embassy had asked the company not to speak to journalists. The FBI has so far released no information about its investigations.

The story is consistent with reports in an American newspaper, based on information from anonymous diplomatic officials, that a vehicle tried to gain access to the embassy at the front entrance and came round the back when that was refused. The report in the *Washington Post* claimed a grenade attack was launched at the embassy's rear entrance.

Another UIIS guard, Joash Okindo, was "exclusively interviewed" in the *East African Standard* yesterday. The newspaper quoted him as saying that he and other security men were engaged in a gun battle with five armed "Arab-looking" bombers who entered the rear compound. Mr Okindo allegedly claimed several colleagues were killed in a grenade attack.



A Kenyan soldier stands guard as a body is removed from the building next to the US embassy in Nairobi yesterday

John McCormick/AP

However, UIIS insists none of its employees died.

Yesterday Mr Okindo's colleagues were scathing about this exclusive. They claim Mr Okindo was the last point of defence between the rear gate and the building and that he took the brunt of the explosion.

He was so badly injured - even it is a miracle they lived to tell the

suffered serious head injuries and his legs and arm were almost severed - that he was in intensive care until Sunday, when he was flown to a US base in Germany for treatment.

The problem for the FBI is that if some of the "witnesses" were close enough to see what they claimed to have seen, it is a miracle they lived to tell the

tale. It is almost certain that the bombers - or bomber - did not.

The FBI's investigation in Nairobi is starting to gain momentum as the search for survivors winds down in the wreckage of Ufundi House, the four-storey office block behind the embassy which was flattened by the blast.

Across the road from Ufundi

House, the FBI have made the extensively damaged Nairobi railway station the focus for the search for forensic evidence.

Meanwhile, Tanzanian police are holding 14 people, including six Sudanese and six Iraqis, for questioning in connection with the simultaneous bomb attack on the US embassy in Dar es Salaam.

Last night the Nairobi bomb site again fell silent as listening devices were again lowered into the tangled metal and concrete. Not a sound was heard.

More than 22 dead have been recovered since Monday night and almost all hope has gone of finding any other survivors. Sammy Nganga, a Kenyan scrap metal dealer, will

probably be remembered as the only bomb victim to be pulled alive from Ufundi House.

Rose Warjuki, the woman he

befriended beneath the ruins and had to leave behind with the promise that help was on its way, is now unlikely to be recovered alive. The death toll in the Nairobi bomb attack is likely to rise to over 220.

Clinton returns home to honour US dead

PRESIDENT Bill Clinton returns to Washington early this morning after cutting short a three-day cross-country trip planned before the embassy bomb attacks in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam. He will chair an anti-terrorist summit at the White House and be at Andrews Air Force base near Washington tomorrow for the return of the bodies of those who were killed.

The coffins will be accompanied back to Washington by the US Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, who leaves for the US base at Ramstein in Germany today. Eleven bodies are

described by some as "surreal", where the very height of high politics and the depth of low politics come together in one figure.

Mr Clinton's curtailing of his trip at any other time would have been hailed as proof of his unerring instinct for political leadership. But not this time.

On one level, the planned three-day swing through Kentucky, Chicago, San Francisco, Los Angeles and Wisconsin was a classic Clinton fund-raiser, hopping from grand hotel to private residence where individuals paid thousands of dollars to be there. A combination of loyalty to friends and party,

and Democratic Party poverty militated against cancelling it. Less than three months before the mid-term congressional elections, the party needs all the friends, and cash, it can raise.

The whispering in the ranks of the White House press corps, however, had been that Mr Clinton's three-day tour was mostly about escaping Washington in the hiatus between Monica Lewinsky's testimony to the grand jury last week and his own testimony next Monday.

It seemed barely believable that Mr Clinton would leave town at such a time. But he did, just as during his first presi-

dential campaign he eventually shunned the hostile national media and retreated to provincial forums. And it is in the provinces that he presents himself so effectively as a son of the grass roots.

The events may appear manufactured - a health policy forum in Louisville, a clean-water event in San Francisco - but the crowds still turn out. At both events, Mr Clinton was greeted with rapturous applause, as though the audience wanted to express their personal, as well as political, solidarity.

Behind the police barriers outside the Chicago Historical

Society, where Mr Clinton attended a fund-raising dinner on Monday, a crowd many hundreds strong waited two hours to see the President emerge to his press conference.

"I just wanted to say I'm behind him," was a common sentiment. By and large, these people, waiting for a clearly tired but beaming Mr Clinton to shake their hands, were from the ranks of America's have-nots: the people you do not see in smart business districts and sleek suburbs. They see Mr Clinton as "their" president.

Mr Clinton, for his part, appeared to draw strength from their support. He is spending longer on the hand-shaking, but seems more careful: less hugging, more shoulder-patting. As he presses the flesh, the tiredness seems to fall away, yielding an expression of almost bemused wonder that people should still turn out to see him.

And, for two whole days, Mr Clinton was able to go without hearing Monica Lewinsky mentioned in public. His only acknowledgement of his "other life" was a brief and oblique allusion to "all the mean things they can say about me and the rest of you [Democrats]" in his fund-raising speech in Chicago.

Mr Chen believes that "the process of political reform in China is very fast" and says that his own freedom to speak and travel is a demonstration of how things are opening up.

Chen Xitong was recently

-

sentenced to 16 years in jail for large-scale corruption. The punishment was considered lenient by some but, according to Mr Chen, the significance of the sentence is not its length but that "it is a sign of the rule of law, not rule by the party".

He sees this as a major departure from China's "feudal" style of rule and says it is sending a big signal to corrupt officials elsewhere.

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Israel agrees to arms talks

BY ERIC SILVER
in Jerusalem

ISRAEL, the Middle East's first and so far only nuclear power, yesterday grudgingly opened the way to negotiations for an international treaty banning the production of fissile materials for atomic weapons.

Under intense pressure from the United States, the Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, gave his blessing to the establishment of a United Nations committee to draft the treaty.

Israel was the last of 61 actual or potential nuclear powers whose assent was necessary. Pakistan compiled last week.

Washington is promoting the treaty to head off a nuclear arms race triggered by the Indian and Pakistani tests earlier this year.

Mr Netanyahu came into line after a personal appeal from President Bill Clinton, but specified that Israel was not committing itself to signing the treaty - or to opening its research facilities at Dimona, in the Negev desert, to international inspection.

In a statement to his Cabinet yesterday, the Prime Minister said: "We made it clear to the

United States that Israel has its own considerations ... in light of this, we will need clarifications from the US. We also made it clear that we have fundamental problems with the treaty which we will also discuss with the US."

Israel's nuclear programme was launched in the late Fifties with French co-operation.

American analysts believe Israel has stockpiled up to 200 nuclear weapons, with Jericho-2 long-range missiles capable of delivering them anywhere in the Middle East. It is also reported to be testing seaborne missiles to ensure a second-strike option in case of surprise attack.

The Indian and Pakistani tests reinforced Israel's preference for keeping its bomb in the basement. It has never conducted a confirmed test, and official spokesmen do not admit Israel has the bomb.

They do not want to provoke their Arab and Iranian neighbours into testing weapons of their own, as Pakistan did after the Indian explosion.

The deterrent was seen as more vital than ever after the test flight last month of Iran's Shabab-3 missile, capable of striking Israeli targets with non-conventional warheads.

LUCRETIA STEWART

'Caribbean politics are notoriously volatile: vociferous, passionate, hyperbolic, with little room for compromise'

— WEDNESDAY REVIEW, PAGE 4

Kosovo refugees in crisis

BY JOHN NADLER
in Qirez, Kosovo

THREE WEEKS into the Yugoslav military offensive against the separatist Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) that has seen scores of ethnic Albanian villages destroyed, international aid agencies warned yesterday of a humanitarian crisis.

"Refugees are living from food that has been stockpiled," said Richard Floyer-Acland, Field Officer for the UN refugee organisation UNHCR. "But unless we start getting more resources in by the winter it's going to be a serious problem."

The desperation of Kosovo's 200,000 displaced people was evident yesterday during an UNHCR aid convoy to Qirez, a village about 25 km west of Pristina in a wedge of territory that is still held by the KLA.

A refugee centre for the embattled Drenica region, Qirez now holds about 6,000 people, including the sick, young and elderly. "My house has 80 people living in it," said a local farmer, who houses 15 family members before the war.

One aid worker said: "Starving [ethnic Albanians] out seems to be the policy."

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Dissident supports Chinese clean-up

BY STEPHEN VINES
in Hong Kong

ONE of China's best known anti-corruption campaigners has given an unexpected vote of support for President Jiang Zemin's crackdown on corruption.

Chen Fang, 54, was in Hong Kong yesterday to launch a book which he has been forced to publish in Hong Kong because it is banned in China. *The Wrath of Heaven - The Resentment of the People* is a supposedly fictional account of the downfall of the Peking Communist Party Secretary and Mayor Chen Ning, the only member of the ruling Politburo to face a court on corruption charges since the People's Republic of China was founded.

Mr Chen's book has been banned in China, but its predecessor, *The Wrath of Heaven - A Major's Severe Crime*, managed to secure publication by an Inner Mongolian publishing house before it was withdrawn after selling 30,000 copies.

The book was also read by President Jiang, who commended it to a closed meeting of senior officials as being an accurate account description of a corrupt official.

However, his new book had to be published in Hong Kong and has been banned in advance in China. Mr Chen says this is because "corrupt officials hate very much and still have much power in their hands to ban the book and protect their positions".

According to Mr Chen, corruption among officials has reached new levels. It is, he says, "now highly organised by organisations with a big power base".

Nevertheless, Mr Chen gives high marks to President Jiang and Premier Zhu Rongji, who have "made combating corruption a top priority in the Communist Party". He confidently expects to see the purge on corrupt officials intensify in the next six months.

Mr Chen believes that "the process of political reform in China is very fast" and says that his own freedom to speak and travel is a demonstration of how things are opening up.

Chen Xitong was recently sentenced to 16 years in jail for large-scale corruption. The punishment was considered lenient by some but, according to Mr Chen, the significance of the sentence is not its length but that "it is a sign of the rule of law, not rule by the party".

He sees this as a major departure from China's "feudal" style of rule and says it is sending a big signal to corrupt officials elsewhere.



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THE INDEPENDENT
Wednesday 12 August 1998

FOREIGN NEWS/11

Arkansas shootings: Two boys admit to massacre that sparked outrage over children's access to guns



Boys guilty of schoolyard killing spree

A BOY pleaded guilty on his 14th birthday yesterday and a 12-year-old friend was convicted on charges they gunned down four schoolmates and a teacher in an ambush outside their Arkansas school.

Mitchell Johnson admitted firing shots in the attack that killed the five last March. A lawyer for Andrew Golden, now 12, said the boy took part but was insane at the time and not mentally competent to understand today's hearing.

But Juvenile Court Judge Ralph Wilson Jr rejected Golden's argument and found him guilty after a two-hour trial.

A sentencing hearing for the two boys was scheduled to begin last night.

Earlier, an attorney for the father of Mitchell Johnson had said the boy would plead guilty to charges that he opened fire on dozens of classmates after luring them out of the school

BY ANDREW GUMBEL
in Jonesboro

building with a false fire alarm.

Mitchell Johnson was expected to take the stand to apologise to the dozens of victims' relatives.

The relatives and some journalists were assigned seats at the so-called adjudication hearing, which under juvenile code is the equivalent of a trial for adults.

The Jonesboro attack was the deadliest in a string of school shootings by disturbed students which have focused the nation's attention on the easy access many children and teenagers have to guns.

It sparked intense debate over how to punish juveniles who have been accused of horrific crimes, with many people complaining that the two boys, even if they were found guilty, would serve only

a few years behind bars whereas an adult convicted of the same crime could face the death penalty.

The two boys stood accused of a carefully-planned attack on fellow students at the Westside Middle School in Jonesboro on 24 March.

Four girls, aged 11 and 12, and a woman teacher died after being shot as they fled out of the building when the fire alarm went off. Nine other students and a second teacher were wounded.

The police said they found the boys near the school minutes later, armed with rifles and handguns which they had allegedly stolen from Golden's grandfather in order to use in the attack.

The boys were each charged with five counts of capital murder but, because they were both under the age of 14 at the time, they could not be tried as adults under Arkansas law.

The problem was that even if they were found guilty, or "delinquent" in the jargon of the state's juvenile law, they could only be kept behind bars at a detention centre until their 18th birthdays.

That sentence could in theory be extended for an extra three years, but the state government does not have a facility suitable for holding them between the ages of 18 and 21, so it would have to build one.

"They'll be free before my three-year-old son is old enough for me to explain what happened to his mother," said

Mitchell Wright, whose wife, Shannon, was the teacher killed at Westside Middle School.

The two defendants were brought to the Craighead County courthouse from a detention centre seven miles away under heavy security.

As they arrived in separate police cars, officers surveyed the area with binoculars from rooftops and a bomb-sniffing dog worked the area around the courthouse.

Both boys were dressed in blue jeans and casual shirts and were handcuffed to chains at their waist. They appeared bewildered as they were rushed into the courthouse.

Judge Ralph Wilson placed a gag order on attorneys in the case but opened the hearing to the public and also allowed a handful of journalists inside.

The two boys have been held under tight security at Jonesboro's youth detention facility since the afternoon of the shooting.

Their relatives have said the boys did carry out the attack but that they have no idea what motivated them.

■ Santa Monica (Reuters) - The teenage Ukrainian immigrant who was convicted of murdering the son of the American comedian Bill Cosby during a botched robbery was sentenced

yesterday to life in prison with no possibility of parole. A six-woman, six-man jury found Mikail Markhasev, 18, guilty last month of the murder on 16 January 1997 of Ennis Cosby, aged 27, a doctoral candidate at Columbia University.

Prosecutors said during the three-week trial that Markhasev was strung out on drugs at the time and looking for money to buy more. Because he was convicted of committing murder during an attempted robbery and using a firearm, Judge David Perez had no choice but to sentence him to life in prison without the possibility of parole.

Australia plans new state for year 2000

BY JOANNA JOLLY
in Sydney

AUSTRALIA'S prime minister has announced plans for the vast Northern Territory to become the country's seventh state on 1 January 2001.

The territory, which comprises one sixth of the country but contains less than 1 per cent of its population, will become Australia's first new state since the Federation was established in 1901.

Australia's prime minister John Howard said the complex issues of Aboriginal land rights, mining royalties and the ownership of uranium deposits in the territory would require consideration. But Aboriginal leaders have already expressed anger over the announcement. They complain that they feel shut out of the negotiations and fear the change in status may affect indigenous rights.

"The issue has been totally steamrolled," said Josie Cranshaw, Northern Territory Com-



missioner for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission. "It has been put through with indecent haste and is a way of denying all citizens' rights." One third of the territory's population are Aboriginals, who own 50 per cent of the state's land and 87 per cent of the coastline.

Less interference from central government would be one of the benefits of becoming a state; the world's first voluntary euthanasia law existed for nine months in the Northern Territory before being overturned by the federal parliament.

Mr Howard said negotiations for the terms and conditions for the new state will start once its people have voted on the proposal.

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Cyprus blaze hits British Army base

BY MARCUS TANNER

BRITISH SOLDIERS based in Cyprus were digging trenches yesterday to stop the spread of a fierce fire that has already claimed the gracious, colonial era villa of the commander of British forces on the island.

About 300 members of British soldiers' families were evacuated earlier from their homes after fires reached the military garrison at Episkopi, burning down Air House, the villa of Major-General Angus Ramsay.

Four British soldiers were slightly injured in the blaze. Three suffered smoke inhalation and the fourth had a heatstroke. They were discharged after medical treatment.

The fire damaged three more houses at the base as well as storerooms and vehicles, the base spokesman Captain



British soldiers helping to fight fires in Cyprus AP

houses more than 4,000 British troops and their families and is like a small town with its own shops and recreational facilities.

The heatwave on the island has ruined the holidays of many Britons who, though delighted by the prospect of strong sun, have been unable to endure the scorching temperatures. Some travel agents have even started issuing warnings to potential holidaymakers.

Jo Brown said: 'The Army estimates that the blaze will cost the base about £2m in repairs.'

The island has suffered from an intense heatwave which has so far claimed the lives of more than 50 Cypriots, most of them elderly.

Eight people died overnight

on Monday alone, after temperatures hit 43C (110 Fahrenheit), the highest recorded in 40

years, the Cyprus Health Ministry said. Hospitals have been stretched to the limit with the admission of some 3,200 patients suffering from heat-related illnesses, the ministry said. The heat wave began last Friday.

The fiercer than usual heat

on Cyprus appears part of a global pattern. This week it

was reported that the world experienced its hottest July since records began.



A truckload of soldiers passing a poster of President Laurent Kabila of the Congo yesterday in Kinshasa, the capital, where the situation remains tense as fighting with rebels continues in the east of the country. Reuters

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Montserrat volcano exiles to go home

RESIDENTS OF two towns on volcano-ravaged Montserrat will be allowed to return home in the next few months as the Caribbean island starts returning to normal, government officials said.

A massive cleanup of ash

around the towns of Salem and Old Towne will begin immediately, after which 1,200 residents

will be allowed to return home to live.

"This is a day that we've

all been waiting for," the Chief

Minister, David Brant said.

The decision came follow-

ing a report by scientists last

week that the Soufrière Hills vol-

cano, which became active in

IN BRIEF

Mandela honours Yasser Arafat

PRESIDENT NELSON Mandela awarded Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat South Africa's highest award for foreigners. Mr Arafat is on a three-day visit to South Africa. Previous recipients of the Order of Good Hope include Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi and former Indonesian President Suharto.

Right-wing leader in fraud claim

RIGHT-WING POPULIST Pauline Hanson's One Nation party is being investigated for fraud after complaints from several expelled members. Australian police said yesterday. A decision is likely later this week on whether the allegations are strong enough to justify a full investigation.

Call to stop Auschwitz crosses

POLAND'S CATHOLIC PRIMATE called for people to stop putting up crosses outside the former Nazi death camp at Auschwitz. Cardinal Józef Glemp's statement follows criticism by the Israeli government and Jewish groups.

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12/13/1998

Taliban victories trap aid workers

THE UN yesterday launched an operation to fly aid workers from Afghanistan to safety in Pakistan after troops from the Taliban Islamic militia pushed further into opposition-held territory, seizing another province and a strategically important town.

The Taliban also claimed that they had shot dead Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, a former prime minister and a key leader among the loose alliance of factions opposed to their rule.

The Taliban advance has been so rapid that dozens of aid workers are now at risk of being caught up in the fighting. Yesterday the United Nations said it would airlift 16 from the area yesterday, hoping to return for another 40 today.

The aidworkers, who were based in the areas worst affected by the two earthquakes which hit north-eastern Afghanistan earlier this year, include at least four Britons.

A spokesman for the opposition Northern Alliance admitted that the Taliban had taken the town of Taloqan after 12 hours of fighting and now held much of Tagar province but denied Mr Hekmatyar had been killed. Ghairad Baheer, Mr Hekmatyar's son-in-law, said that he had spoken to him late yesterday afternoon and he was "very much alive".

Mr Hekmatyar, ousted from power in 1996 when the Taliban took Kabul, is believed to have retreated from Kabul to Taloqan with veteran commander Ahmed Shah Masood and political leader of the Northern Alliance, Burhanuddin Rabbani.

Mr Hekmatyar was one of the key Mujahedin commanders who fought against the occupation of Afghanistan by Russians. Despite his extreme Islamic views, he received sub-

stantial support from the Americans. After the fall of Kabul he fled to Iran and returned to Afghanistan in March this year.

Reports say Mr Hekmatyar was shot yesterday by three gunmen during streetfighting in Taloqan. But soldiers from Hekmatyar's faction and Ahmed Shah Masood's faction have often fought each other and, if Hekmatyar is dead, he may not have been killed by the Taliban.

The Northern Alliance seems incapable of stopping the advance of the Taliban. Earlier this week the Islamic militia stormed Mazar-e-Sharif - the only major town in Afghanistan that was outside their control. Though they have seized the town twice before, their hold on the north now seems more secure than at any previous time.

Taliban forces appeared yesterday to be preparing for a major assault on the central mountainous region of Bamyan - the stronghold of the Shia Muslim faction of the Northern Alliance - where a recently extended runway has allowed Iran to fly in cargo planes full of supplies. Iran, a Shia Muslim country, has been aiding the Northern Alliance against the largely Sunni Muslim Taliban.

The Taliban denied knowing of the whereabouts of a group of Iranian diplomats, based in Mazar-e-Sharif, who disappeared when the city fell. The Iranians believe they have been taken to the city of Kandahar - the headquarters of the Taliban.

A UN source said that pilots from Uzbekistan were also captured, along with planes loaded with supplies for the Northern Alliance, at Mazar-e-Sharif. They too have been taken to Kandahar, the source said.

BY JASON BURKE
in Islamabad



Keiko the killer whale at the Oregon Coast Aquarium, where he has been learning to catch and eat live fish ready for his return to the wild

At last, film star Willy will go free

BY KATE TURNER

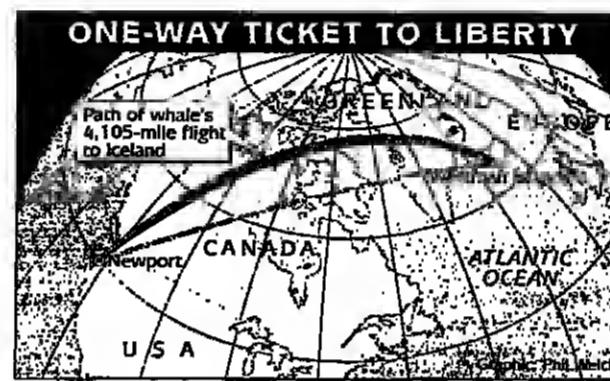
SOMETIMES LIFE imitates art. Keiko the killer whale and star of the 1994 hit film *Free Willy* is on the brink of being returned to the wild. At least this is the hope of the Free Willy Keiko Foundation and its sponsors, including Warner Brothers.

Keiko was captured, aged two, off the coast of Iceland and spent more than a decade in an overly warm and cramped tank at an aquarium in Mexico before finding both fame and good fortune in the Hollywood film.

Following the release of *Free Willy*, Keiko was moved in January 1996 to his current home in Newport, Oregon, where he lives in a custom-made two-million-gallon capacity tank.

The film tells the story - not far from the truth - of a killer whale who was separated from his family only to end up in an amusement park. The friendship forged between the whale and Jesse, a young runaway, is the stuff of which blockbusters are made.

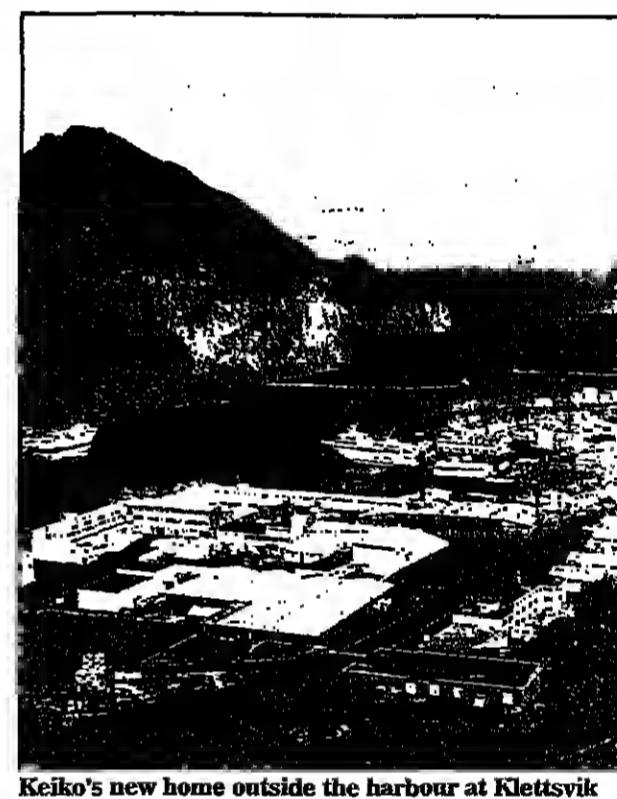
Keiko, with his flight aboard a US Air Force C-17 cargo plane only to be formally confirmed, will make an eight-hour flight back from whence he came on 9 September. Iceland has agreed, after some objections, to the project to



United States, however, means that he is now much healthier. But there are fears that after so many years in captivity - Keiko is estimated to be around 20 years old - he will not survive in the wild. His handlers will fly with him and remain in Iceland to monitor his progress as he begins his new life in a floating sea pen close to local research facilities. His final destination is the open sea in the North Atlantic.

Back in Oregon the whale will be sorely missed. Six metres long and weighing 3,000kg, Keiko has been an enormous attraction. He is thought to have generated an estimated \$75m for his aquarium.

After so many years in the limelight, how will Keiko adapt to his new environment? Only time will tell. But with all that heavyweight support - from the US Air Force, Warner Brothers and his own foundation - behind him, the answer to the question: "How far would you go for a whale?" seems to be "a very long way".



Keiko's new home outside the harbour at Klettsvik

Rabbi of Venice Beach puts his faith in the stars

AMERICAN TIMES
LOS ANGELES



MOST SUNDAYS, you can find Rabbi Shlomo Schwartz among the tarot-card readers, fortune-tellers and incense-sellers on the Venice Beach boardwalk in Los Angeles with a booth of his own: "Jewish Astrology".

If you miss the sign, he is unmistakable. A jovial 52-year-old with a long beard who answers to the nickname Schwartzie, he sports a T-shirt and a baseball cap bearing the words "Grateful Yid".

During his two hours on the boardwalk, curious strollers - a Jewish couple from Brooklyn, a trio of young Israelis with whom Schwartz chats in Hebrew - stop by for free readings.

Jewish astrology is based on Jewish mysticism, or kabbalah, that uses numerology, Torah passages and people's Hebrew names to determine their nature and destiny. The booth is one of the rabbi's techniques to acquaint unaffiliated Jews with their heritage, and also to connect Jewish singles with each other.

His main focus is the Chai Center (*chai* is Hebrew for "life"), a non-profit organisation he runs with his wife, Olivia, and their 12 children from his Mar Vista home. The Chai Center organises huge Passover Seders, Shabbat dinners, single mixers, study sessions and free High Holy Day services. His ads read: "Don't pay to pray." The centre does outreach at shelters for abused children, at prisons and hospitals, and presides over weddings and funerals, or, in Schwartzie-speak, "Match 'em, match 'em, and dispatch 'em."

He operates on a \$225,000 (£140,000) annual budget from a fund-raising banquet, private Jewish astrology readings, and sales of baseball caps, with "Chai" in Hebrew lettering, and tie-dyed yarmulkes.

"I always say, 'Business is

course, it has nothing to do with money.'

"Without God or religion, you begin to get self-centredness at every level. President or pauper, it's 'What can I get for me?', with regard to ethical values or semblance of decency."

"A person like Monica Lewinsky is a victim of omission of the Jewish family value structure," he says, turning to President Bill Clinton's alleged affair with the former White House trainee.

With Jews turning away from Judaism at a reported rate of 2 million over 15 years - many marrying outside the faith - Schwartz measures his success in terms of the number of unaffiliated Jews he can reach. So he says he touches some 15,000 Jews a year. The Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur services draw more than 3,000 people; Passover Seders draw about 700 and singles parties about 600.

"Schwartzie reaches people no one else can reach, because he's so open and tolerant and accepting and embracing," says Rabbi Nachum Braverman, education director of the Los Angeles branch of Aish Hatorah, a synagogue and Jewish outreach network.

He is one of the most loving and deeply spiritual people I've met. He and his wife give their lives to helping others," says Trudy Green, a talent manager who has worked with Janet Jackson and the Rolling Stones. "He's larger than life. If he wasn't a rabbi, he'd be a celebrity himself."

He grew up a conservative Jew, the son of a cantor in Atlantic City. He was drawn to his religion's more mystical aspects, and, at 19, entered the Rabbinical College of America in Morristown, New Jersey. "I was part of the Beat Generation, hanging out in Greenwich Village, listening to Bob Dylan and Allen Ginsberg, drinking cheap wine and espresso, playing the bongos and listening to poetry," he recalls.

"I figured I could always hang out in the Village. Studying with a rabbi seemed more

difficult, so I decided to try that first." But his radical streak remained. At 23, married with a child, he decided his calling was outreach, and that the place in most need was Los Angeles.

"Here, Jews don't even have a clue," he says. "Out of 600,000 Jews, 70 per cent are non-affiliated. For outreach, you can't lose. Because they've had no experience with religion, they're often the people who are most open."

Schwartz spent 13 years honing his user-friendly approach to Judaism as the director of campus activities at Chabad House, the University of California Jewish organisation in Los Angeles. He wore T-shirts that read "I survived Hebrew school", ran services in English, and organised parties such as the "Coming Out Party for Closet Jewry".

"Humour is the medium that dispels the misconception that Judaism is uptight and serious, retrospective and Holocaust-oriented," he says. Chabad House didn't agree. "They didn't like the singles thing at a nightclub." So, 10 years ago, Schwartz struck out on his own.

Since then, his more conventional Jewish detractors have had to acknowledge his contribution. Chabad hires him to speak, and the former beatniks and hippies he left so long ago have been wandering over to his philosophical turf in search of their own elusive happiness.

Meanwhile, Schwartz's tactics on the Venice Beach boardwalk clearly draw interest, as passers-by slow down and walk over.

"They won't come over to a rabbi trying to sell them Judaism, but they will come over to a Jewish Astrology table," he says.

"I get a crowd because I'm appealing to everyone's number one interest: themselves."

SUSAN KARLIN

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BUSINESS

\$110bn BP-Amoco deal set to spark oil merger frenzy

BRIEFING

Dresdner sizes up major US bid

SHARES in Germany's second-largest bank, Dresdner, fell almost 6 per cent yesterday on reports that it was in bid talks with the US broker PaineWebber. At an estimated price of \$9bn-\$10bn, it would be the largest-ever foreign purchase by a German bank and speculation focused on how Dresdner would finance such a deal.

The first option, an outright, unassisted purchase, would almost inevitably involve a capital increase as well as force Dresdner to realise much of its DM28bn hidden reserves. Secondly, a purchase could be made in co-operation with insurance giant Allianz, which owns about 22 per cent of Dresdner and which plans to increase its co-operation with the bank in asset management.

The third option favoured by analysts would involve a pooling of interests similar to the share swap employed in the Daimler-Chrysler merger. But analysts said it was unclear how a share swap could be organised given that Dresdner was not listed on Wall Street. Both banks declined to comment yesterday.

'Deadly Doug' gets 60pc pay rise

ASTON VILLA

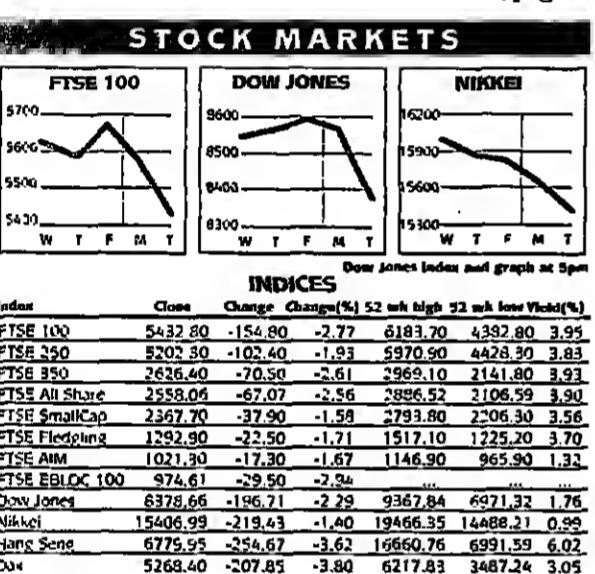
DOUG ELLIS, the chairman of Aston Villa, was awarded a massive 60 per cent pay rise last year even though shares in the Premier League football club have fallen sharply. Mr Ellis, nicknamed 'Deadly Doug' because of his penchant for sacking managers, received a salary package worth £204,421 in the year to May, up from £127,641 in the previous twelve months.

Fans who bought shares in the club at 1100p when it floated last year, have not fared so well. The shares have halved in value, reflecting lacklustre performances on the pitch and the City's disillusionment with football. They closed at 542.5p yesterday.

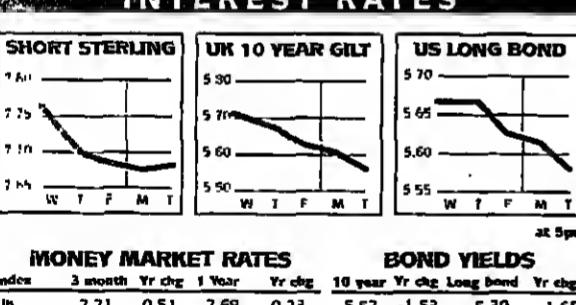
BOC to axe 5,000 jobs globally

BOC, is to axe almost 5,000 jobs worldwide to improve profitability and shield itself against a trading slowdown, the industrial gases group confirmed yesterday. The City welcomed the £267m restructuring and the share price moved swiftly upward, but unions called for urgent meetings. However, there was relief in the UK that the axe will fall on only 500 domestic jobs after speculation the number would be twice as large.

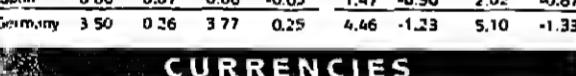
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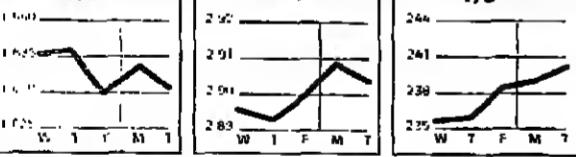
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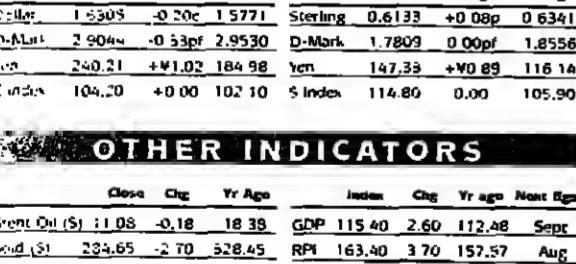
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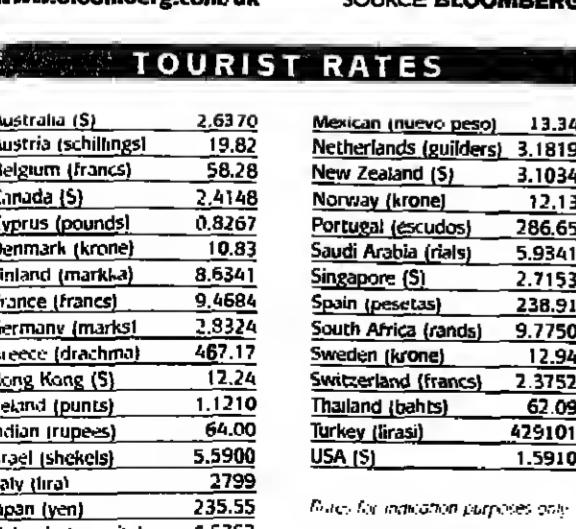
CURRENCIES



OTHER INDICATORS



TOURIST RATES



THE WORLD oil industry was poised for a frenzy of consolidation last night after the shock \$110bn (£87bn) merger of BP and Amoco, creating a super oil major to rank alongside Shell and Exxon.

Analysts were predicting a wave of further deals and alliances as second-tier players in the oil sector scramble to shore up their positions.

Texaco and Mobil were seen as vulnerable to merger activity, as were specialist exploration companies such as Enterprise Oil and Lasmo.

Adam Sieminski, energy analyst with BT Alex Brown in the US, said: "This deal is good for both BP and Amoco. But it will set the bar for the competition. There are now three super majors and I do not think Texaco, Chevron or Mobil will idly stand by and watch this happen."

Alan Marshall, energy analyst with Robert Fleming, said: "This is a pretty cute deal. Amoco is the cheapest and least profitable. There is a lot of scope for an improvement in its profits."

Potential difficulties could come if Amoco shareholders decide that a 15 per cent premium is not high enough, said Mr Marshall of Robert Fleming.

There are also significant differences in cultures which Mr Fuller conceded would create some "rubbing" from time to time. One example of this is BP's increasing concern about the impact of global warming.

BP has pulled out of the Global Climate Coalition (GCC) of US oil and car companies opposed to the Kyoto Treaty conditions on fossil fuel emissions. Amoco has been a big supporter of the GCC.

Wall Street has been awash with rumours of talks between all major oil companies. Whilst dialogue about downstream links has been under way for some time, discussions have spread to all aspects of business.

Oil prices are languishing at a 25-year low - they averaged \$12.44 a barrel in the first half of 1998 compared to \$19.09 for the same period last time. Profits and share prices have slumped, so there has been little for the players and merchant banks to talk about.

The average net profit of the leading US integrated companies fell 28 per cent in the second quarter. The UK exploration and production sector has underperformed the London market by 33 per cent this year.

The two companies insisted that they saw no major regulatory hurdles to the merger. But a number of asset sales are being lined up should competition authorities require it.

AS well as consolidating BP's position as the world's number three oil major, the deal will also create the world's third biggest chemicals company with leading positions in key products such as acetic

acid, acrylonitrile and terphthalic acid, which is used to make polyester fabric and plastic containers.

BP is offering just under four of its shares for every Amoco share, which last night valued Amoco at \$49.8bn. The offer is a 15 per cent premium to Amoco's closing price on Monday.

The 6,000 job losses out of a combined workforce and associated restructuring are expected to result in one-off charges of about \$500m. But Sir John said the merger would be earnings-enhancing in the second year.

Larry Fuller, the chairman and chief executive of Amoco, will become joint chairman alongside Peter Sutherland of BP but will retire in 2000. BP shareholders will own 80 per cent of the company and its directors will dominate the board accounting for 13 of the 22 seats including six of the eight executive director posts.

Potential difficulties could come if Amoco shareholders decide that a 15 per cent premium is not high enough, said Mr Marshall of Robert Fleming.

He does have a weakness for cigars, but he is physically small, immaculately groomed, and speaks softly with a Cambridge University correctness.

But no-one who has sat across a deal table from him or witnessed his ability to make swinging job cuts would see Sir John as anything other than a tough campaigner.

The 50-year-old BP boss is loved in the financial community for the remarkable rehabilitation of the company's share and trading performances in recent years. But he is also respected across the Atlantic where BP is liked and its shares busily traded on Wall Street.

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Browne makes a dream marriage

THE BREAK-UP of John D Rockefeller's Standard Oil in 1911 was one of the first big anti-trust cases brought in the US. Later the Justice Department moved on AT&T too, breaking it up into a long-distance operator and a collection of local Bell operating companies, the so-called Baby Bells.

Time marches on, and now through merger and acquisition, these old monopolies are being reassembled, or at least partially so. Long-distance telephone operators are merging with Bell operating companies, and the Baby Bells are merging one with another. Yesterday's awesome merger announcement from BP and Amoco brings together two of the six companies so forcibly extracted from the original Standard Oil - Standard Oil of Ohio (now part of BP) and Standard Oil of Indiana (from which Amoco grew).

Well, we live in a global economy now don't we, and mergers which even ten years ago would have been seen as unacceptable are now positively welcomed by regulators and politicians alike. Certainly BP's takeover looks unlikely to encounter serious regulatory obstacles. BP will become number one or two in the market in terms of sales across a



OUTLOOK

large swathe of the US Eastern seaboard and the Mid West, but even so market share won't be high enough to justify radical regulatory surgery. Overlap in Europe on sales and refining is virtually non-existent.

From an investment point of view too, the deal looks like a dream marriage, the only caveat being that size on this scale often proves unwieldy and consequently unmanageable. None the less, integrated oil companies have more experience of operating on a global scale than almost any other industry and their cultures tend to be more similar than in other businesses too. Moreover, even after this deal, BP will still be only the third largest in the world after Exxon and

Shell, so there's no reason it shouldn't work.

It is not hard to see why investors love this deal so much. At a stroke it transforms BP's market position from distant to close third, putting it in an altogether different league and greatly increasing its fire power and clout. It's not just the \$2bn of annual cost savings. For the first time BP will be battling on the same level as the other two. This is not an automatic guarantee of success. Both Shell and Exxon have been through the trenches. But in the oil industry it does give a strong lead of the starting blocks. Medium and smaller players are going to find it increasingly difficult to survive in such an environment, even though some of them - Enterprise being the obvious example - have an outstanding ex-plotation record.

St John Browne, chief executive of BP was always going to find it hard to build on the enviable record of his predecessor, David (now Lord) Simon, the man who brought BP back from the dead. With this deal, he gives himself more than a fighting chance. There will be some financial fall out. US investors do not, on the whole, like holding stock in UK listed companies, and many

will sell down the BP shares they get in return for their Amoco stock. But on the face of it, Sir John seems to have pulled off the deal of the year and for that he deserves applause. Now all he's got to do is make it work.

Markets enter danger zone

IT'S BEEN long in incubation, but Asian flu is finally beginning to strike home, both here in the UK, and more potently, on the other side of the Atlantic in the United States. US exports are down, growth in corporate earnings is slowing to a standstill, and the US economy is showing signs of faltering for the first time in eight years.

More worrying still for America's army of small investors, the stock market is heading south at a pace of knots. Since rather more than a half of all people in the US invest in the stock market, either directly or through mutual funds, that's going to make consumers feel less well off, they'll stop spending as much, and the economy will slow even further. Certainly the US stock market record, by making people richer, has helped sustain the US economy in

a way that might now be dramatically reversed.

None of this should come as a surprise to anyone. It's what we and others said might happen when the Asian meltdown led to a one day fall of 550 points in the Dow last Autumn. Yet most US investors chose to ignore the warnings and carried on pouring money into the stock market in the misguided belief that the Asian crisis was just an isolated problem in a far off region.

It is testimony to the mood of blinkered optimism that coloured perceptions at that time that many came to see Asia as a positive boon to the US economy. By dampening growth, it would take the heat out of the economy and reduce the need for interest rate increases. Between the beginning of this year and its peak on 17 July, the Dow rose a further 18 per cent.

Reality is now pressing home with vengeance. Asia's difficulties look like getting worse before they get better. Much hope has been invested by the international financial community in Keizo Obuchi, Japan's new Prime Minister but the more we see of him, the more he seems like a carbon copy of his predecessor Ryutaro Hashimoto. Certainly he

doesn't look like the miracle worker necessary to pull the Japanese economy out of the doldrums.

So finally irrational exuberance in US markets is giving way to rational caution. Even small, retail investors, for the past year the backbone of the US stock market, are showing underlying signs of losing confidence and bailing out. Enriched by the great bull market of the 1990s, many of them have no experience of a bear market. Yet we are half way to the 20 per cent fall that marks the official definition of a bear market already.

Furthermore, the gains of the first half of the year were largely confined to Dow constituents and other leading US corporations. Most US stocks are down on the year as a whole. Even if the bear is not yet fully visible, the bull has long since vanished.

Whether the bear comes out of the woods will depend a lot on what small investors do in the US over the next few weeks. If they lose their nerve and panic, we are all in trouble. Whatever happens, they are going to have to learn that the spectacular stock market returns of recent years won't go on for ever. Here in the UK we have our own special problems. The economy

looks a good deal shakier than the US. We are in that stage of the cycle where inflationary pressures are still strong, demanding tough monetary medicine, yet growth is plummeling with some areas of the economy in outright recession. For stock market investors, it's all beginning to look very worrying, very worrying indeed.

Cockburn rings the changes

AT FIRST glance Bill Cockburn's plans to shake up BT's UK operations look like the actions of a man with too much time on his hands. When he was plucked from WH Smith to become BT's UK managing director last year, the idea was that Mr Cockburn would manage the shop while Sir Peter Bonfield was on the other side of the Atlantic running the merger with MCI. But before his name was on the door of his office the deal had collapsed, and BT was looking a bit top-heavy. That judgement is too harsh. BT desperately needs to reform itself to meet increasingly capable and fleet of foot competition. Mr Cockburn's plans look a reasonable stab at the problem.

IN BRIEF

£20m delay to skin product

A REGULATORY setback over a foot treatment made from babies' foreskins will cost Smith & Nephew £20m over the next two years, the healthcare group revealed yesterday.

The company said that the US regulators' request for more clinical trials would delay the launch of Dermagraft, its artificial skin used to treat diabetic foot ulcers, to 2000 - two years later than expected. Novartis is set to launch a similar product at the end of 1999.

Smith & Nephew reported an 11 per cent fall in interim profits to £72m. The shares fell 4p to 155p.

BSkyB signs up

BRITISH Sky Broadcasting, the satellite television group, has dealt another blow to its rivals by signing up two more channels to its digital service on an exclusive basis for several years.

Flextech is providing the channels, including Living, which carries the Jerry Springer chat show and UK Arena, one of the channels produced by Flextech's joint venture with the BBC.

The news is a blow to ONDigital, the joint venture between Carlton and Granada, which plans to launch a 30-channel digital service this year.

Mobile licences

THE GOVERNMENT is proposing to issue four new licences to operate third-generation mobile phone technology when they are auctioned next summer.

A consultative paper from the Radio Communications Agency says the Government is working on the assumption that it will auction four of the licences, which will allow operators to offer services such as video telephony and Internet access.

Loss for Cantab

CANTAB Pharmaceuticals, a biotechnology company in which Glaxo Wellcome has a 4 per cent stake, yesterday reported a £2.9m loss in the first half of 1998 compared with a £2m profit a year ago.

The company said the 1997 profit had been boosted by a £1m payment from Glaxo for the licence to a Cantab drug.

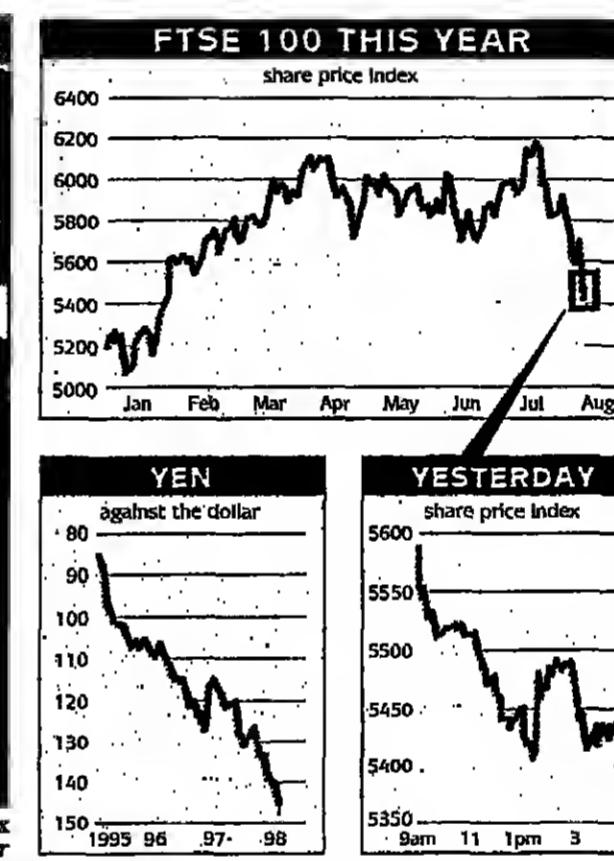
Headlam profits

THE CARPET distributor, Headlam group, reported pre-tax profits up 30 per cent at £2.9m.

Asian worries wipe £22bn off London shares as Wall Street takes a fresh battering



Traders on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange look on as the Dow Jones index slumped yesterday, adding to the negative global sentiment



Investors' hopes rest with Obuchi

BY STEPHEN VINES
in Hong Kong

Mr Obuchi makes no claims to knowing anything about economics. He brought back into office someone who has headed the finance ministry not once, but twice, and served as prime minister.

Kiichi Miyazawa, 78, reluctantly agreed to take on the job of finance minister again. He said he was too old and had 'no will' to take up the post. However Mr Obuchi was insistent. 'I will not be able to form a cabinet unless you agree,' he told him.

English-speaking Mr Miyazawa has an impressive range of American connections. His son-in-law is the second most senior official at the US embassy in Tokyo.

One opposition member described Mr Miyazawa as a 'war criminal' for having approved loose monetary policies during his tenure as premier. This sparked an orgy of speculative land-buying, producing a price bubble. When land prices crashed in the 1990s, banks were left burdened with an estimated \$529 billion in bad loans.

Renewed bear market fears as stocks plunge

STOCK MARKETS plunged around the world yesterday, sparking concerns that the markets could be at the beginning of a sustained bear run for the first time since the early 1990s.

Concerns over currency devaluations in Asia were cited as the key reasons behind yesterday's falls, which saw the FTSE close at its lowest level for over six months. All the major European bourses fell, trading was suspended in Moscow following sharp share price falls, and, in the US, the Dow Jones Industrial Average was down 209.6 points at 8365.27 in midday trading, contributing to the negative global sentiment.

There was continued gloom in Asia, where share prices in Hong Kong hit a five year low as worries over the local currency added to an already depressed mood. In Japan, the Nikkei 225 fell by almost 220 points to close at 15,406.99 after Japanese officials admitted that the country's recession was deepening. The yen hit a eight year low against the dollar, breaching the critical 140 barrier. The renewed bout of weakness in the yen has in-

creased the risk of a devaluation of the Chinese yuan, traders said. Meanwhile in India, fears of a sovereign debt default grew, after the markets learned that the country was rescheduling its debt.

In London, the FTSE closed down 154.8 points at 15,428.8, having been as much as 184 points down earlier in the day. The slide in the equity index started as soon as the London market opened for business, with dealers saying they were spooked by the losses in Asia overnight. The FTSE fell steadily throughout the morning, but was later buoyed by news that BP and Amoco, the oil giants, intended to merge, and the index was trading down 105 points just prior to Wall Street's opening.

However, the merger news provided only a temporary respite. The weak start on Wall Street damaged sentiment, and the FTSE fell again during late afternoon trade. The FTSE is now more than 10 per cent lower than the record highs seen last month, but still around 5 per cent up on the start of the year.

A similar stock market pattern was played out across Europe. The Irish share index fell by more than 2.5 percent, hitting its lowest level since early March. Germany's DAX ended almost four percent lower, and Russia's leading share index touched levels not seen since May 1996. Investor sentiment in Latin America was also hit, as dealers speculated that the Asian gloom could spread to all emerging markets. The Mexican peso slipped more than 1 per cent to a record low of 9.21 pesos to the dollar.

There are all sorts of worries about Asia, more worries about Russia and a global economic slowdown at a time when inflation is already very low," said Stefan Bergheim, economist at Merrill Lynch in Frankfurt.

In Japan, meanwhile, the Economic Planning Agency (EPA) said the economy was in an "extremely difficult situation" and is slowing. Taichi Sakaiya, the EPA's new head, said the EPA's report represented a "downgrade" to the

Japanese economy. In Hong Kong, the blue chip Hang Seng Index fell 3.6 per cent to close at 6,780 points, below the level many market makers had suggested that support would kick in.

There was evidence of continued speculative pressure on the Hong Kong dollar, reflected in another rise in three month interbank rates which went to 12 per cent yesterday, as opposed to 11 per cent on Monday. Traders are becoming increasingly convinced that a devaluation in the yuan is a real possibility, and if the yuan falls, the market consensus is that the Hong Kong dollar peg will go too.

Traders in Shanghai yesterday supported heavy selling pressure on the yuan, which fell to a near five year low on the black market. Liu Mingkang, the deputy governor of China's central bank, warned speculators not to underestimate Peking's determination to defend its currency.

Analysts were cautious in assessing the longer-term implications of yesterday's developments. Only a handful felt the current stock market correction would turn into a

sustained bear run - a long period of falling share prices.

"I don't think it's terminal, but I don't think it's over yet," said Richard Davidson, strategist at Morgan Stanley Dean Witter in London.

Khuram Chaudhry, UK strategist at Merrill Lynch, said: "Our view is that we're not really on the edge of a bear market. There is poor sentiment and a poor global backdrop. But the fundamentals are sound."

Mat Dennis at ABN Amro

was also of the opinion that the latest round of jitters represented a stock market correction rather than the beginning of a prolonged bear run. This was largely down to concerns over earnings, and earnings concern has not, historically, been sufficient to lead to a sustained bear run.

However, strategists at ABN Amro noted that some bear market warning signals have begun to appear. Yesterday, the FTSE 100 broke through its 200 day moving average, a measure seen by some as one bear indicator.

Although it may be premature to say a bear run is a certainty, the risks are certainly rising.

Beer comes in 1 3/4 pint glasses.

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Shake-up to streamline BT into single unit

BY PETER THAL LARSEN

declined to give any figures for job losses.

Under Mr Cockburn's plans, BT will merge its consumer and business divisions into a single unit - called BT UK Markets - which will offer a complete range of BT's products. It will be supported by other units concentrating on customer services, products and solutions and networks.

However Cellnet, the mobile phone operator in which BT holds a 60 per cent stake, will continue to be run as a separate unit.

Mr Cockburn said the total UK telecoms market was expected to double in value in the next five years, spurred by the growth of electronic commerce and Internet communications.

"We have got to reshape ourselves to pay more attention to the growth areas," he said.

Mr Cockburn added that although BT might continue to lose market share to its competitors, the market was growing fast enough for it to continue to increase its revenues.

From next year, BT will begin to tailor packages of products for different types of customers. The packages will combine products such as email, pagers, voicemail and mobile phones, possibly on a single bill.

The packages - which are subject

to approval by Ofcom, the telecoms watchdog - will allow BT to target customers by how much they spend on telecom services rather than whether they are business or an individual.

In the past, the company has struggled to service the market for small and medium-sized enterprises and the fast-growing proportion of the population which now works from home.

MAIN MOVERS																	
RISES						FALLS											
PRICE/PERP CHG/UPP 5.02%						PRICE/UPP CHG/UPP 5.07%											
EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRIES 1.11%						EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRIES 1.11%											
Holding Corp 183.00 12.50 7.25						Albert Fisher 12.75 -2.00 -1.50											
Bayer/Clarkson 55.00 1.50 0.67						Leeds Sporting 11.25 -2.00 -1.10											
BHP Billiton 755.00 2.00 2.85						Arm Holdings 161.00 -10.00 -7.75											
Millennium/Esco 455.00 12.50 2.00						Rabobank 122.50 -2.50 -2.25											
Sanderson 190.00 3.00 -0.25						Lifecare Assurance 1.00 -0.50 -0.50											
Lorbar 277.00 7.00 2.55						Pace Micro Tech 4.50 -0.50 -0.15											
Land Secs 885.00 21.50 4.50						Mannfeldt Brew 259.00 -20.00 -8.12											
MFI 45.00 -4.50 -4.50						Met 157.50 -10.00 -8.70											
Met 455.00 10.00 2.25						Brit Airways 560.00 -4.00 -3.82											
MARKET LEADERS																	
TOP 20 VOLUMES at 5pm																	
Stock	Vol.	Stock	Vol.	Stock	Vol.	Stock	Vol.	Stock	Vol.	Stock	Vol.						
Rel/Perfsons	50.00	Royal Z. Sun	0.30	Lloyd's	9.20	Cable & Wireless	7.00	Siemens	1.00	Siemens	0.00						
Siemens	51.00	Perfsons	0.30	Standard	9.20	Gen Elec	7.20	Siemens	0.00	Siemens	0.00						
Thorn	49.00	Siemens	0.30	Siemens	9.20	Siemens	7.20	Siemens	0.00	Siemens	0.00						
Siemens	48.00	Siemens	0.30	Siemens	9.20	Siemens	7.20	Siemens	0.00	Siemens	0.00						
Siemens	47.00	Siemens	0.30	Siemens	9.20	Siemens	7.20	Siemens	0.00	Siemens	0.00						
Siemens	46.00	Siemens	0.30	Siemens	9.20	Siemens	7.20	Siemens	0.00	Siemens	0.00						
Siemens	45.00	Siemens	0.30	Siemens	9.20	Siemens	7.20	Siemens	0.00	Siemens	0.00						
Siemens	44.00	Siemens	0.30	Siemens	9.20	Siemens	7.20	Siemens	0.00	Siemens	0.00						
Siemens	43.00	Siemens	0.30	Siemens	9.20	Siemens	7.20	Siemens	0.00	Siemens	0.00						
Siemens	42.00	Siemens	0.30	Siemens	9.20	Siemens	7.20	Siemens	0.00	Siemens	0.00						
Siemens	41.00	Siemens	0.30	Siemens	9.20	Siemens	7.20	Siemens	0.00	Siemens	0.00						
Siemens	40.00	Siemens	0.30	Siemens	9.20	Siemens	7.20	Siemens	0.00	Siemens	0.00						
Siemens	39.00	Siemens	0.30	Siemens	9.20	Siemens	7.20	Siemens	0.00	Siemens	0.00						
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Siemens	37.00	Siemens	0.30	Siemens	9.20	Siemens	7.20	Siemens	0.00	Siemens	0.00						
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Siemens	32.00	Siemens	0.30	Siemens	9.20	Siemens	7.20	Siemens	0.00	Siemens	0.00						
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Siemens	25.00	Siemens	0.30	Siemens	9.20	Siemens	7.20	Siemens	0.00	Siemens	0.00						
Siemens	24.00	Siemens	0.30	Siemens	9.20	Siemens	7.20	Siemens	0.00	Siemens	0.00						
Siemens	23.00	Siemens	0.30	Siemens	9.20	Siemens	7.20	Siemens	0.00	Siemens	0.00						
Siemens	22.00	Siemens	0.30	Siemens	9.20	Siemens	7.20	Siemens	0.00	Siemens	0.00						
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Siemens	18.00	Siemens	0.30	Siemens	9.20	Siemens	7.20	Siemens	0.00	Siemens	0.00						
Siemens	17.00	Siemens	0.30	Siemens	9.20	Siemens	7.20	Siemens	0.00	Siemens	0.00						
Siemens	16.00	Siemens	0.30	Siemens	9.20	Siemens	7.20	Siemens	0.00	Siemens	0.00						
Siemens	15.00	Siemens	0.30	Siemens	9.20	Siemens	7.20	Siemens	0.00	Siemens	0.00						
Siemens	14.00	Siemens	0.30	Siemens	9.20	Siemens	7.20	Siemens	0.00	Siemens	0.00						
Siemens	13.00	Siemens	0.30	Siemens	9.20	Siemens	7.20	Siemens	0.00	Siemens	0.00						
Siemens	12.00	Siemens	0.30	Siemens	9.20	Siemens	7.20	Siemens	0.00	Siemens	0.00						
Siemens	11.00	Siemens	0.30	Siemens	9.20	Siemens	7.20	Siemens	0.00	Siemens	0.00						
Siemens	10.00	Siemens	0.30	Siemens	9.20	Siemens	7.20	Siemens	0.00	Siemens	0.00						
Siemens	9.00	Siemens	0.30	Siemens	9.20	Siemens	7.20	Siemens	0.00	Siemens	0.00						
Siemens	8.00	Siemens	0.30	Siemens	9.20	Siemens	7.20	Siemens	0.00	Siemens	0.00						
Siemens	7.00	Siemens	0.30	Siemens	9.20	Siemens	7.20	Siemens	0.00	Siemens	0.00						
Siemens	6.00	Siemens	0.30	Siemens	9.20	Siemens	7.20	Siemens	0.00	Siemens	0.00						
Siemens	5.00	Siemens	0.30	Siemens	9.20	Siemens	7.20	Siemens	0.00	Siemens	0.00						
Siemens	4.00	Siemens	0.30	Siemens	9.20	Siemens	7.20	Siemens	0.00	Siemens	0.00						
Siemens	3.00	Siemens	0.30	Siemens	9.20	Siemens	7.20	Siemens	0.00	Siemens	0.00						
Siemens	2.00	Siemens	0.30	Siemens	9.20	Siemens	7.20	Siemens	0.00	Siemens	0.00						
Siemens	1.00	Siemens	0.30	Siemens	9.20	Siemens	7.20	Siemens	0.00	Siemens	0.00						
Siemens	0.00	Siemens	0.30	Siemens	9.20	Siemens	7										

Collapse could have been even worse

EQUITIES MELTED in the summer-time heat wave. Footsie collapsed 154.8 points to 5,432.8 and if British Petroleum had not announced its huge merger with US group Amoco the fall could have been more than 500.

At one time BP was up 125p to 125p. But such was the doom and gloom in the stock market that the gain was slashed to a mere 22p at 125p by the close. BP fuelled much of the day's trading activity, easily topping the volume chart with, according to Seag, nearly 132 million shares traded. Even so the absurdities of the order book managed to distort the final share price.

Most of the closing trades were comfortably above 800p. In fact a spaghetti-fingered trader managed to input a final trade of 7.5 - just what that meant is anybody's guess. It is, however, indicative of the nonsense which now masquerades as a definite dealing system and its impact on the final Footsie calculation.

The Footsie decline, if the Stock Exchange figures can be believed, represented the biggest fall since the Far Eastern crisis really started

MARKET REPORT



DEREK PAIN

to trouble investors last year.

A slump of 157.3 occurred shortly after Chancellor Gordon Brown had introduced the market to new-style order trading in October. On what is now known as Brown Monday the index fell 61.1; the 157.3 decline occurred just a few days later. And in the following week Footsie at one time was off a record 457.8 before ending the session down 85.3 at 4,755.4.

The decline and subsequent rallies since the introduction of order-driven trading could lead a casual

observer to believe that once again the market has over-reacted.

Those who have for long advocated the end of the bull market are no doubt at last counting their bedraggled chickens. But Footsie is still comfortably above its year's opening - 5,182.3 - and remains within hailing distance of the 1998 year-end level predicted in January by many strategists.

A long, hot summer had been widely expected. And of course August is a notoriously poor month for equities with most of the big investment hitters away on holiday.

The supporting indices, which displayed remarkable resilience in Monday's retreat, recorded understandable dismay. The mid cap index fell 102.4 to 5,202.3, lowest since February.

There are also fears the Chinese will be forced into a devaluation which could damage Hong Kong.

In the depressing atmosphere only 10 Footsie stocks made headway with Thames Water creeping up to the leader board with a mere 2p gain (0.18 per cent) gain to 1,120p following its cash handout to shareholders. The BP ripples with their implication of more, perhaps

SHARE SPOTLIGHT



Source: Datastream

even bigger, oil deals, helped Lasmo put on 3.5p to 216p and BG (British Gas as was) up to 39p. But Shell, still smarting from the BT Alex Brown "mistrust" comments fell a further 19.5p to 247.75p.

British Airways dived 4.5p to 509p. Neil Kinnock, the EU transport commissioner, has jumped on the Brussels bandwagon, advocating that BA should not be allowed to sell its Heathrow flight slots. The former Labour leader, who was prepared to back action deemed to be illegal under EU rules by Air France, thinks BA should give away its slots if it wants to forge an alliance with American Airlines.

British Steel fell a further 5.5p to 116.5p.

Emap, the publisher, continued to benefit from BT Alex Brown support, gaining a further 7p to 1,156p but Business Post's fall from grace was evident by a 35p decline to 637.5p.

Financials were hard hit. Standard Chartered fell 4p to 593p.

Among small caps Acorn Computer is expected to unload its 27.2 per cent stake, slumped 110p to 1,015p. Other recent high

flyers off balance included Colt Telecom, tumbling 205p to 2,607.5p and Admiral, the computer group, 77.5p to 1,242.5p.

MFI Furniture found yet another low. The shares in steady trading lost a further 4.5p to 45.5p. Another of the market's seeming perennial casualties, Pilkington, the glass-maker, fell to its lowest for six years, off 7.5p to 89p.

The milk scare lowered Express Dairies 10p to 145.5p and Unigate 13.5p to 581p. Robert Wileman Dairies slipped 6p to 185.5p.

Dicom, the subject of a distressing trading announcement on

Monday, rallied 18.5p to 123.5p and Dialog, saying it had won a five-year information deal with the BBC, added 12.5p to 185p.

Antonov gained its ninth licensing deal for its gearbox technology. This time the partner for its revolutionary development is Opeal. Antonov's shares firmed 4p to 82p. Shortly after the company's flotation in 1995 the shares hit 144p.

SEAG VOLUME: 941.3m
SEAG TRADES: 65.336
GILTS INDEX: n/a

GALAXY MEDIA held at 90p against a 195p peak. The group is being reshaped under its new chief executive, Graham Gutteridge, who is selling his television business, Sports News, to the company.

Robert Stigwood, the Australian-born music impresario, and Christopher Moran, the entrepreneur, have quit. The Moran stake was placed by stockbroker Townsley at 76p. Interim figures were disappointing, with a £120,000 loss.

ALEXANDERS, the garage group where bid talks are in the air, could be near to giving up its independence.

The company is headed by Aleksandra Clayton, daughter of the founder, and controlled through its ordinary shares. These have been active this week and yesterday rose a further 1.75p to 16.75p. The less powerful "A" shares gained 1.75p to 16.75p. Both classes below their 12-month peak of 24p.

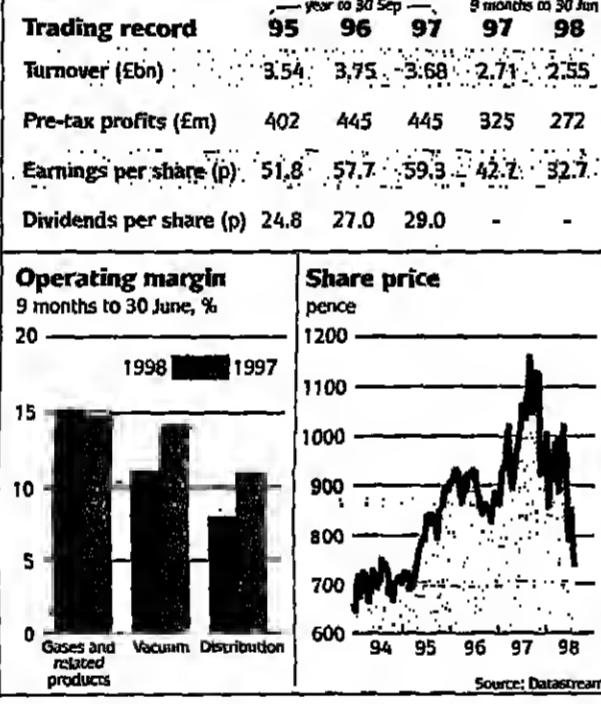
BOC's bravery is applauded

INVESTMENT

EDITED BY PETER THAL LARSEN

BOC: AT A GLANCE

Market value: £3.61bn, share price 736p (-4p)



Nycomed needs some good news

NYCOMED AMERSHAM remains a company in transition. More than a year after the £2bn merger between the UK health sciences group, Amersham, and the Norwegian X-ray specialist, Nycomed, the enlarged healthcare group is still trying to find its own identity.

Yesterday's maiden interim results, which showed an 8 per cent increase in profits to £14m on turnover down 2 per cent to £667.9m, are a step in the right direction.

The imaging division, which provides the bulk of the group's sales, benefited from the efforts to move away from the low-margin, highly competitive X-ray market towards more sophisticated products such as booming iodine salts, used in the treatment of prostate cancer.

Nycomed will have to continue down this road and hope that the new products can off-

set the fall in X-Ray sales in the long term.

The biotechnology division, a joint venture with the US drug giant Pharmacia & Upjohn, posted flat sales. The company blamed the disruption caused by the merger and vowed that sales would bounce back next year helped by several market-leading products.

set the fall in X-Ray sales in the long term.

The biotechnology division, a joint venture with the US

pharmaceutical division was also disappointing and looks ripe for a sale, as it is too small to compete with the bigger players.

But the real bad news came on the cost-saving side of the merger, where the company admitted that its target of £37m in improvements for 1998 would not be met and said that investors would have to settle for £30m this year.

Nycomed maintained that this was just a "rephrasing" of revenues and would not jeopardise its goal of £70m of cost savings by the year 2000.

This may well be so, but added to the uncertainties over imaging and biotech, it looks as if Nycomed is asking investors to take a little bit too much on trust.

After yesterday's 7.25p slide to 395p, the shares are on more than 20 times forecast 1998 earnings of around £230m. Until some firm news comes through on cost savings and product development, they are high enough.

Impressive Millennium

IS MILLENNIUM & Copharne in denial? Investors are convinced that the entire hotel sector is facing a slowdown as a result of the Asian crisis and the strong pound. But the hotel group remains stubbornly bullish.

Until yesterday, the doomsayers who have pushed Millennium's shares down by

almost 30 per cent since June are winning the argument, but Millennium hit back with an impressive set of first-half figures.

The group's occupancy rates ticked up by 0.8 percentage points to 77.7 per cent, while average daily room rates advanced by 9 per cent to £88.26.

What's more, Millennium & Copharne is optimistic about current trading. Asian travellers account for just 9 per cent of its revenues, and business custom is not as vulnerable to the strong pound.

With the traditionally strong second half of the year starting well, Millennium could hardly be in a more positive position.

All this was enough to convince investors in the City that the shares are oversold, and they promptly rose 12.5p to 455.5p.

Analysts were also relieved that Millennium has so far not splashed out on a big hotel acquisition right at the top of the cycle, although the group is still looking to make acquisitions and reckons that it can spend as much as £150m without having to raise cash from shareholders.

On full-year profit forecasts of £50m the shares trade on a forward P/E of 15 - a discount to the rest of the market - suggesting the shares are good value.

But, although Millennium has bucked the trend, uncertainty about a wider economic slowdown will continue to depress the shares. Hold.

Spurs line-up for TV free-for-all

PEOPLE AND BUSINESS

BY JOHN WILLCOCK



of free-for-all Mr Chisholm would relish.

Adrian Sanders (Lib Dem) says: "Don't buy pedl bin liners; use the supermarket shopping bags they give you for free."

The most disgraceful bit of advice comes from his colleague Lembit Opik, MP for Montgomeryshire: "Don't spend anything and leave just before its your round in the pub," I would never do that...

CITY SPIN doctors Shandwick had a jolly time at their summer party in the GLC's County Hall last month. The bunt for corporate clients was held in the new London Aquarium, which is full of exotic and fearsome sea creatures.

Shandwick's new chief executive Mike Murphy endeared himself to the assembled clients with his refreshing honesty when he quipped: "There are probably more sharks on the outside than in the tanks."

WHILE MOST sensible people have fled the scorching City for balmy climes, the headhunters are hard at it. NatWest Global Financial Markets has hired Pablo Eizayaga as managing director of its global emerging markets group.

Mr Eizayaga has been joined by members of his team from UBS and will be based in London, reporting to Howard Kurz, managing director and global head of foreign exchange.

ACROSS TOWN BT Alex Brown has poached Andrew McCullagh from Deutsche Morgan Grenfell to be a director in its leveraged finance group. Mr McCullagh is a veteran of several high profile deals, including Compass Healthcare, Automotive Products and Wellworths.

MERHMET DALMAN continues his drive to grow Commerzbank Global Equities in London by creating a media equity research team, in come Nick Ward and Gareth Thomas from Credit Lyonnais Securities Europe.

COMPANY RESULTS

Name	Turnover (£)	Pre-tax (£)	EPS	Dividend	Pay day	Ex-Dividend
Alvis Petroleum (I)	US\$2.00b (5.55b)	-5.55bn (-14.31bn)	18c (-0.45c)	-	-	-
BOC Group (I)	2,558 (2.71b)	272.4m (255.4m)	32.7p (22.73p)	-	-	-
Brundage (I)	-	0.23m (0.22m)	0.25p (0.21p)	0.55p (0.55p)	-	-
Castrol Pharmaceutical (I)	£2.05bn (8.04m)	1.07m (0.95m)	1.85p (2.05p)	1.0p (0.95p)	01.10.98	01.09.98
EPSI Group (I)	50.47m (43.64m)	2.61m (2.31m)	7.5p (6.3p)	3.3p (3.15p)	12.10.98	07.09.98
Eurolife Engineering (I)	12.8m (12.21m)	7.21m (7.05m)	11.8p (11.73p)	3.75p (3.75p)	29.09.98	17.09.98
Headline Group (I)	180.7m (118.4m)	8.89m (8.05m)	9.0p (7.49p)	2.1p (1.75p)	22.12.98	30.11.98
Memory Corp (I)	10.18m (2.80m)	-1.22m (1.17m)	1.46p (-1.37p)	-	-	-
Millennium & Copharne (I)	104.7m (95.52m)	24.3m (18.73m)	12.3p (10.23p)	3.2p (2.29p)	01.10.98	17.04.98
Miller Estates (I)	40.2m (32.4m)	9.97m (9.20m)	26.5p (25.9p)	3.92p (3.53p)	29.10.98	07.09.98
Nycomed Australia (I)	£97.7m (98.0m)	11.04m (10.52m)	10.4p (9.5p)	1.8p (-)	02.11.98	05.10.98
Quantex (I)*	-	1.28m (-)	3.14p (-)	-	-	-
Scandinavian Brassell (I)	£42.0m (37.85m)	8.02m (7.53m)	15.1p (14.28p)	2.1p (1.84p)	02.11.98	05.10.98
Seagull Group (I)	49.2m (49.0m)	8.65m (8.19m)	1.2p (1.49p)	3.0p (3.0p)	15.10.98	17.09.98
Smith & Neafey (I)	£10.1m (9.15m)	7.15m (6.91m)	4.92p (4.24p)	2.4p (2.4p)	05.12.98	02.11.98

(*) Final (I) Interim (I) - Aire Net - EPS is pre-incorporation *Dividend to be paid as a P.D. **IPOs are actual price

**IPOs are actual price

***IPOs are actual price

****IPOs are actual price

*****IPOs are actual price

Monty facing a battle in Seattle



ONCE threaten boycott of Tour

CYCLING

ON THE day that four race riders failed blood tests, one of the Spanish teams who withdrew from this year's Tour de France threatened to boycott the sport's premier event in future.

ONCE, who were the target of police searches during the Tour, said the team would take part in the event and other French races only if riders could race without interference from the authorities beyond internationally accepted drug tests.

They came under scrutiny as French police joined investigations into the Festina team after claims that illegal drugs had been smuggled into France. All four Spanish teams were among those who pulled out of the Tour in protest. On Monday it emerged that tests on substances seized from another team, TVM, on the Tour had confirmed the presence of illegal drugs.

Four riders in the Mobilvetta team were disqualified from the Tour of Portugal yesterday after blood tests. The Italians' haemoglobin level - the proportion of red blood cells in the blood - was above 50 per cent. That level is considered a health risk and can indicate the use of erythropoietin (EPO). EPO, a synthetic hormone that stimulates production of oxygen-carrying red blood cells, was at the centre of the Tour de France allegations.

Yesterday riders' representatives met officials of the sport's governing body, the ICU, at the Olympic Museum in Lausanne, Switzerland, to discuss the sport's drug crisis.

GOLF

BY ANDY FARRELL
in Seattle

FOR THE first time in more than 50 years a major championship returns to America's Pacific north-west. But as much as the 80th USPGA Championship at the Sahalee Country Club is a homecoming for one of Seattle's favourite golfing sons, Fred Couples, the week is another testing one in the eventful life and times of Colin Montgomerie.

The Scot arrives at the final major of the year not only having missed the cut at the Open but with painful memories of his last trip to America. At the US Open at Olympic in San Francisco in June, Montgomerie was subjected to the sort of heckling more suited to terraces than fairways. "I've had happier weeks," Monty said.

While Montgomerie, who will play with Ernie Els and Phil Mickelson on the first two days,

has been here since Sunday, working on his putting, his arrival has, inevitably, been heralded in the local press. "His attitude, remarks and behaviour over the last couple of years have made the often-acerbic Scotsman, fairly or unfairly, America's favourite golfing villain," noted the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*.

Officials of the PGA of America are aware of the problems Montgomerie has experienced at the last two US Opens and have measures in mind should there be a repeat. But they are also hopeful that, despite the lack of top class golf tournaments in the north-west the area has been without a PGA tour event since

Horacio Blasius won the Greater Seattle-Everett Classic at the Everett Country Club in 1986, the galleries will be knowledgeable and mindful of the etiquette of the game.

"As a citadel of politeness, Seattle has no rival among the major American cities," one columnist said. "Whether due to the moderate climate, moderate politics, moderate Scanдинavians or a long-building resistance to the effects of caffeine, we are slow to work up diaphragm-ripping heckles at our jock heroes. We cough nervously and stare at our shoetops. But now comes a fresh

test of our legendary tolerance. Monty is in town."

However, most of the attention so far has been on Couples, the 1992 Masters champion, who grew up in Seattle and last played at Sahalee a tightly tree-lined course, 20 years ago. Huge galleries have attended his practice rounds. "It is kind of embarrassing having people shout at you all day whether you are three under or five over," Couples admitted.

"But this is where I grew up and it makes me feel good. It would be fantastic to win here. This is once in a lifetime deal. If I won here, I would retire. That would be enough. I would

quit and go to heaven if I won the PGA in Seattle."

Bernhard Langer will miss the championship with a neck injury and Darren Clarke has remained in Northern Ireland to be with his wife and week-old son. But Stuart Appleby will play despite the death of his wife Renay in a freak accident

at Waterloo Station three weeks ago. She was crushed between two cars while unloading luggage prior to a trip to Paris for a second honeymoon. "I lost my best friend," said Appleby, who has since been home to Australia for the funeral and to be with family. "Now I am trying to get back to normality."

HAMILTON

HYPERION
6.00 Mellieu 6.30 Trojan Hero 7.00 Claim

Gebal Claim 7.30 Tempress 8.00 Weltz 8.30 Theonitus

GONG: Good to Soft (so in places) STALLS: 1m 5 ft 11"; grade;

red - stands easy DRAW ADVANTAGE: High for 5f and 6f

■ Pogni handles courses with peerless cool.

Course is N of town on 8701, Hamilton West station (service from Glasgow) in ADMISSION: Club £12; Grandstand and Paddock £20; Box Seats £25 (incl. £5.50 & standard); accompanied guests free all admissions. CAR PARK: Free

■ LEADING TRAINERS: M. Johnstone - 36 winners from 184 runners (a success rate of 20.7%); J. Berry 35 from 186 (15.1%); M. Lee 22 from 264 (8.3%); P. Haslam 21 from 202 (10.4%);

■ LEADING JOCKEYS: J. Wainwright 26 from 186 rides (14.1%); J. Cartwright 21 from 186 (11.3%); J. Rousey 19 from 186 (10.3%); J. Cartwright 19 from 186 (10.3%); J. Rousey 19 from 186 (10.3%);

■ FAVOURITES: 2/1 with 601 races (31.9%);

LONG-DISTANCE RUNNERS: Mellieu (20), Weltz Premiere (20)

have been sent 441 miles.

BLINKED FIRST TIME: Baddi (outset) (voted) (6.0); Schenck (3.0); Gia (Life) (3.0)

6.00 PEPPERMILL CATERING MAIDEN HANDICAP (£) 3,000 added 1m 6f

1 5003 SPARTAN ROYALE (6) P Moneti 4.0 ... P Pease 14

2 42-43 MELLIEU (20) P Lady Heron 4.9 ... P Pease 14

3 40-41 BADDI (20) P Lady Heron 4.9 ... P Pease 14

4 40-41 CASTER (20) P Lady Heron 4.9 ... P Pease 14

5 60-65 CASTLE FRIEND (20) M Hammond 3.2 ... J Fortune 9

6 0-2200 PRINCE NICHOLAS (3) K Hogg 3.8 ... P Pease 14

7 000021 CROWNED (20) C Thorncroft 3.8 ... P Pease 14

8 000022 CHIEF (20) C Thorncroft 3.8 ... P Pease 14

9 000023 RUMBLE (20) C Thorncroft 3.8 ... P Pease 14

10 000024 RUMBLE (20) C Thorncroft 3.8 ... P Pease 14

11 000025 RUMBLE (20) C Thorncroft 3.8 ... P Pease 14

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74 000088 RUMBLE (20) C Thorncroft 3.8 ... P Pease 14

75 000089 RUMBLE (20) C Thorncroft 3.8 ... P

French catch Shuttle

BY RICHARD EDMONDSON

WHEN YOU think of Deauville, you think of poodles attached to swete women. You imagine Omar Sharif wandering from *les planches*, the boards that form a path over the Normandy beaches, you consider the Parisian smart set on leisurely breaks from the turbulence of the capital.

This week, though, notions about Deauville's clientele have had to be changed. Over recent days you have not been able to move for expensive cameras transported by little, dark-haired gentlemen. The Japanese are in town.

The visitors are not taking advantage of a travel offer from a Tokyo national newspaper. They are in Europe to chronicle great times for their horses. Seeking The Pearl became the first horse from Japan to win a European Group One race, the Prix Maurice de Gheest, on Sunday, and now there is great expectation that her home superior, Taiki Shuttle, will achieve similar high station in the Prix Jacques le Marais on Sunday.

"It's incredible the amount of interest these horses have generated," Desmond Stoenham, the French correspondent of the *Racing Post*, said yesterday. "Everywhere you turn there seem to be Japanese film crews relaying news back home. The fish restaurants are doing great business."

It has long been fashionable to rubbish Japanese racing as an insular and mediocre sport. The only meaningful contact with the rest of the world seemed to be in the Japan Cup. But then the money in the Land of the Rising Sun started to attract top stallions from both Europe and the United States. It appeared an almost logical progression for a Derby winner to be paraded in the Epsom winners' enclosure, smothered in stamps, and posted to the Far East.

This exodus was considered partially acceptable because Japan showed little interest in foraging outside their shores. Certainly they do not have to for cash. Of the 13 richest races in the world, only three are held outside Japan.

Now, however, there seems to be a growing realisation that Japan can show its expertise to an equine world that has thus far leant back and scoffed as it accepted great wads of notes for its breeding animals.

Owners split over jockeys

NIGEL PAYNE, the Grand National-winning owner, last night backed the right of jockeys to carry personal sponsorship on their breeches.

But not all of Payne's fellow owners are in support as the countdown to next week's jockeys' meeting at York continues.

Leading riders, led by Jockeys' Association vice-president Richard Dunwoody, have said that they are prepared to flout current regulations and compete with sponsored logos on their riding breeches.

This is in defiance of the British Horseracing Board's insistence that racehorse owners must retain the right of veto.

Payne, a member of the Earth Summit partnership and public relations officer for Aintree racecourse said: "I am totally supportive of the jockeys' situation and would have no worries whatsoever if a jockey was riding Earth Summit and carrying advertising on his breeches and boots, whoever the sponsor or the stable's sponsor was."

Payne, who sat alongside Jockeys' Association secretary Michael Caulfield during initial discussions upon jockeys' personal sponsorship with the BHB in 1993, said riders were requested to put their demands on hold until the question of owners' sponsorship and VAT reclamation had been resolved.

Five years down the line from this, he says be understands their grievance.

"I do feel the jockeys are owed something and entitled to it," he said. "I feel the rules have



Fabre: Nursing Xaar

Cross and Lend A Hand, the projected opponents this weekend, have been warned.

It is also anticipated that Deauville on Saturday will be the stage for one of the most disappointing horses of the season. The Andre Fabre-trained Xaar was in just about every Tee to Follow after his devastating win in the Dewhurst Stakes last season, and there were plenty of clever fellows congratulating themselves after the colt had beaten Gulland in the Craven Stakes this spring.

The equestrian was last seen after the odds-on favourite finished only fourth in the 2,000 Guineas. After that there has been nothing. Xaar was reported to be suffering from an allergy post-Newmarket, and was then running a temperature at a time when a return to the racecourse was envisaged.

Now he has something to prove in the Group Two Prix Guillaume d'Ornano. "The feeling is that he may have had a much harder race in the Craven than everyone realised," Stoneham said. "Now he's got to establish himself again."

Owners split over jockeys

been rewritten, which is onerous on the jockeys and I believe there are certain areas they were expecting to get the go-ahead on which have been restricted.

"As long as the sponsor knows what he is buying and the jockey knows what he's selling then everyone can negotiate on that basis."

"What you don't want is the situation where you have sold something you can't give, or you've bought something you can't have," he added.

Sir Peter O'Sullivan, the former BBC racing commentator

Nap: Top of The Form (Nottingham 7.20)
NB: Inducement (Beverley 4.00)

whose colours have been carried by successful racehorses such as Ativo and Be Friendly, regretted what he saw as a confrontational stance being taken by the riders.

"Basically I support jockeys in most of their enterprises but I think possibly they have been a little bit precipitous in their demands," Sir Peter said.

"It wants thinking through more. It's not as simple as it has been interpreted by the riders and I think they are starting off entirely on the wrong foot by putting words into people's mouths. It wants thinking through calmly, coolly and not in a confrontation mode."

SALISBURY

HYPERION

2.20 Mutamayyaz 3.50 Ladham
2.50 Aflionclaudia 4.20 Silma Lady
3.20 Immundo 4.50 Jungle Story

GOING: Good to Firm.

STALLS: Straight - for older; in - inside; in - outside.

DRAW ADVANTAGE: High best for 5 & 6.

■ COURSE: 5fW on town of 1,004. Bus service from Cambridge and Newmarket stations.

ADMISSIONS: Club 6s; Grandstand & Paddock 5s; 18s to 25-year-olds 6s; Family Enclosure 5s; CAR PARK: Members 2s; remainder free.

■ LEADING TRAINERS: R. Hannon 38-336 (107%); J. Dunlop 23-123 (18.7%); I. Balding 15-125 (P. Cole 14-94 (49%).

■ LEADING JOCKEYS: L. Dotter 23-90 (25.6%); J. Reid 23-109 (18.4%); D. O'Neill 20-152 (12.6%); T. Sprake 25-77 (8.9%).

■ FAVOURITES: 2.50 (51%); 3.20 (51%).

BLINKERED FIRST TIME: Tropical Forest (scored, 420); Mary Call (scored, 450).

Canisius: Third of 22 in maiden at Windsor on debut last August, but very impressive in subsequent races. Has 5f long distance to overcome. Business: Fair form, 2nd, fifth of 27 in a nursery at Redcar (5m, good to firm) final start. Will stay 1m2f, but may need to go further. Slept up from 70m in the last month and has run credibly, third of 7 to Monument at Kempton (good to firm) last week.

Aflionclaudia: Often finishes at 3m in a style which suggests 1m2f should suit, but he had very few chances at this trip. Interesting following decent effort last week.

Silma Groove: Goes very well in first ground, or used to, there being no evidence that he retains his ability. Has been dropped 25b in the handicap since reappearing.

Ritual Rule: Well-bred colt but didn't show much ability as 2yo and was well beaten in 1m handicap on return. 1m2f should suit him better. If he is in a good enough form Groove Groove: Consistent at 1m over the last 8 months and also creditable second in a Lingfield handicap on one try at 1m2f. Had excuses last time. Should run well.

Downside: Dashed. Showed a lot of ability last season but seemed to go the wrong way and gave no hint of a revival on reappearing. Also, it breed to do well.

VERDICT: There are major doubts over whether several of these can show form, but two who should perform well judged on the season's evidence are Aflionclaudia and Groove Groove. Aflionclaudia is unexposed at the trip, and it should suit him, while Groove Groove has been a regular sort this year with plenty of form that gives him a major chance.

BETTING: 2.50 (Sporthop-eade's 4-1); Silma Lady, 4-2; Magic Memories, 11-2; Shoot The Rapida, 8-1; Aflionclaudia, 10-1; La Tenebrosa, 12-1; Rogerberg, 15-1 others.

1997: Wilcox 2.5 1 J Reid 3-1 ftr (R Hannon) drawn 5] 14 ran

RACING/21

2.20 SANDOWN MAIDEN STAKES (CLASS D) £4,750 added 2YO 6f Penally Value £2,290

1 DALY OF YORK (16) (Richard Green (Fine Painting)) P Cole 8.0 ... C Carter 15

2 GRINDING GIBBONS (20) (Steve Wedderburn) J. Dunlop 0.0 ... R. Studd 1

3 MAMBO (16) (Mark Shand (Good Form)) P. Cole 8.0 ... L. Dotter 1

4 0228 (6) (Gibson) D. Bremont 0.0 ... N. Pollard 5.4

5 MUTAMAYYAZ (18) (Perez) M. Alcock 0.0 ... R. Hannon 8.8

6 PAGAN KING (10) (The Gap Partnership) J. Toller 0.0 ... S. Sanders 2

7 RIBBINS (The Cheltenham Partnership) B. Manton 0.0 ... K. Fellow 12

8 00000 (27) (Raoul Penseur) P. Cole 8.0 ... S. Davies 5

9 00000 (28) (Raoul Penseur) P. Cole 8.0 ... R. Studd 1

10 00000 (29) (Raoul Penseur) P. Cole 8.0 ... P. Cole 7.0

11 00000 (30) (Raoul Penseur) P. Cole 8.0 ... A. Clark 10

12 THOMAS HENRY (21) (Steve Houghton) J. Moore 8.0 ... R. Hannon 8.8

13 GREENSEND (19) (Lord Camerton) R. Hannon 8.8 ... R. Parsons 2

14 00000 (22) (Lord Camerton) R. Hannon 8.8 ... T. Sprake 11

15 ZABAO (USA) (16) (Lord Camerton) J. Parsons 8.8 ... T. Sprake 11

16 00000 (23) (Lord Camerton) R. Hannon 8.8 ... 15 declined

17 00000 (24) (Lord Camerton) R. Hannon 8.8 ... 17 declined

18 00000 (25) (Lord Camerton) R. Hannon 8.8 ... 18 declined

19 00000 (26) (Lord Camerton) R. Hannon 8.8 ... 19 declined

20 00000 (27) (Lord Camerton) R. Hannon 8.8 ... 20 declined

21 00000 (28) (Lord Camerton) R. Hannon 8.8 ... 21 declined

22 00000 (29) (Lord Camerton) R. Hannon 8.8 ... 22 declined

23 00000 (30) (Lord Camerton) R. Hannon 8.8 ... 23 declined

24 00000 (31) (Lord Camerton) R. Hannon 8.8 ... 24 declined

25 00000 (32) (Lord Camerton) R. Hannon 8.8 ... 25 declined

26 00000 (33) (Lord Camerton) R. Hannon 8.8 ... 26 declined

27 00000 (34) (Lord Camerton) R. Hannon 8.8 ... 27 declined

28 00000 (35) (Lord Camerton) R. Hannon 8.8 ... 28 declined

29 00000 (36) (Lord Camerton) R. Hannon 8.8 ... 29 declined

30 00000 (37) (Lord Camerton) R. Hannon 8.8 ... 30 declined

31 00000 (38) (Lord Camerton) R. Hannon 8.8 ... 31 declined

32 00000 (39) (Lord Camerton) R. Hannon 8.8 ... 32 declined

33 00000 (40) (Lord Camerton) R. Hannon 8.8 ... 33 declined

34 00000 (41) (Lord Camerton) R. Hannon 8.8 ... 34 declined

35 00000 (42) (Lord Camerton) R. Hannon 8.8 ... 35 declined

36 00000 (43) (Lord Camerton) R. Hannon 8.8 ... 36 declined

37 00000 (44) (Lord Camerton) R. Hannon 8.8 ... 37 declined

38 00000 (45) (Lord Camerton) R. Hannon 8.8 ... 38 declined

39 00000 (46) (Lord Camerton) R. Hannon 8.8 ... 39 declined

40 00000 (47) (Lord Camerton) R. Hannon 8.8 ... 40 declined

41 00000 (48) (Lord Camerton) R. Hannon 8.8 ... 41 declined

42 00000 (49) (Lord Camerton) R. Hannon 8.8 ... 42 declined

43 00000 (50) (Lord Camerton) R. Hannon 8.8 ... 43 declined

44 00000 (51) (Lord Camerton) R. Hannon 8.8 ... 44 declined

45 00000 (52) (Lord Camerton) R. Hannon 8.8 ... 45 declined

46 00000 (53) (Lord Camerton) R. Hannon 8.8 ... 46 declined

47 00000 (54) (Lord Camerton) R. Hannon 8.8 ... 47 declined

48 00000 (55) (Lord Camerton) R. Hannon 8.8 ... 48 declined

49 00000 (56) (Lord Camerton) R. Hannon 8.8 ... 49 declined

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nited.

Little hope for Super League applicants

RUGBY LEAGUE
BY DAVE HADFIELD

ALL THREE new clubs bidding for membership of Super League next season are likely to be snubbed today.

Cardiff, Swansea and Gateshead all had high hopes of getting the go-ahead from a meeting of Super League clubs in Huddersfield this afternoon.

But the directors of both Super League and the Rugby

League are urging caution after hearing reports on the financial viability of the three bids from the accountants, Deloitte Touche, on Monday.

Although none of the parties to that meeting is saying anything on the record – an astonishing feat of discretion in the loose-lipped world of rugby league – I understand that there was general alarm at the picture painted by Deloitte.

There has been widespread support within the game for the

principle of spreading to new areas – not least because Sky is pushing in that direction – but there is now a fear that none of the applicants has sufficient cash up front to start a club successfully.

That raised the spectre of another short-lived failure, like Paris St Germain, or, going further back into the sport's chequered history of expansion, Scarborough or Kent Invicta.

A number of Super League

clubs are strongly committed to the idea of new franchises, even though it will cost them part of their share of the cash allocation from News Ltd. But they can be expected to back-track very rapidly today if it looks as though the newcomers would prove to be a heavy financial burden.

That would be a damaging climb-down for the game as a whole. The merits of the three applications have been loudly trumpeted, not least by Super

League's managing director, Maurice Lindsey, and an announcement today that none of them measures up will be an admission that potential investors are not interested in the code.

Following the death of the last South Wales club two years ago, the failure to bring either Cardiff or Swansea into the fold at a time when rugby union in the Principality is in such disarray will be widely seen as a last chance lost.

It is understood that Gateshead are seen as being closer to meeting the relevant financial criteria than the two Welsh applicants but still fall well short.

Today's meeting could try to save face by delaying all three applications until the season after next, or could even tell them that they can still get in this time, provided they can satisfy the accountants that they have the funds in place.

Realistically, however, time

has virtually run out. It would already be a mad dash for any of the applicants to get their playing and coaching staffs in position for next spring and a further delay would probably end their hopes.

That would please those who believe that the game is best confined to the M6 corridor and those who fear that the available talent would be too thinly spread among as many as 15 Super League clubs.

Global recruits signed by Best

RUGBY UNION

BY TIM GLOVER

DICK BEST, London Irish's English coach, has been on a recruitment drive rarely seen since the days of Kitchener. At the last count the Irish had signed 11 new players, not so much from the Emerald Isle, but the southern hemisphere. From last season's squad, 23 have left the club.

Best pointed out that the Irish Rugby Football Union have put 120 players on contract, including a significant figure from London Irish. Best has signed the wing Simon Berridge and the flanker Jake Boer from Western Province, the scrum-half Kevin Pott and the lock Ryan Strudwick from Natal, and the prop Peter Rogers from Transvaal. From New Zealand he has brought Stephen Boshoff, the former All Blacks stand-off, the full-back Jarrod Cunningham, the hooker Michael Howe, and from Australia, the flanker Rob Gallagher. He has also recruited from Bedford, Moseley, Coventry and London Scottish.

The recruitment did not end with a squad of full-time professionals. Andy Keast, the Quins coach, joins as coach to the backs and Geoff Huckstep as chief executive from Wasps.

However, the Exiles have suffered two blows: the loss of Lions lock Jeremy Davidson to Castres for an annual salary of £230,000, and the local council's refusal to grant planning permission for the development of the ground. Sunbury's capacity is limited to 7,000 and the club need 10,000 to show a profit.

On Saturday the Irish play Wasps at Sunbury in a pre-Premiership friendly. Apart from giving Conor O'Shea, the Irish captain, a chance to get acquainted with his new teammates, the match will be attended by leading referees. "We will use it to study and discuss the laws," Best said. "Assessors of referees will also be present and they are the people who hide in the corner with half a pint of bitter and who ruin rugby in this country."

Trouble for Zurich as money talks

ATHLETICS
BY MIKE ROWEBOTTOM

THE WELTKLASSE meeting in Zurich, traditionally known as the seven-hour Olympics, created a problem for itself last year. A stupendous night of athletics saw three world records set. Follow that.

Tonight, the organisers of the world's outstanding 'one-day' meeting attempt to do just that, with the usual collection of world-class talents. Or most of them.

This year, Zurich yoked within the International Amateur Athletic Federation's new vehicle for grand prix meetings, the Golden League. And the withdrawal of top sprinters Maurice Greene and Ato Boldon from tonight's programme in the Letzigrund Stadium points to fundamental flaws in the new design.

Greene and Boldon, world champions respectively at 100 and 200 metres, have pulled out after failing to agree terms with the meeting promoter.

But the problem lies not so much with Zurich as with the structure of the Golden League, which is heavily weighted to-

wards rewarding athletes for performance, and away from the more traditional method of awarding appearance fees.

Appearance fees are still being paid – top performers such as Haile Gebrselassie, who lowered the world 5,000m mark in an outstanding race in Zurich last summer, are getting an estimated \$60,000 (£36,000) on a scale which goes down to \$10,000 (£6,100).

However, the overall trend is to pay fewer athletes less money up front, partly in response to frequently repeated criticism that some athletes were simply turning up and going through the motions at grand prix events.

Five athletes in Zurich – Gebrselassie, Bryan Bronson (400m hurdles), Marion Jones (100m), Charity Opara (400m) and Kuchum El Guerrouj (1500m) – are still in with a chance of winning a share in the \$1m (£60,000) jackpot on offer to those who win their event at all six Golden League meetings and the concluding grand prix final in Moscow on 5 September.

Greene and Boldon are among many athletes, including the world and Olympic 400m champion, Michael Johnson, who are out of the running having lost at least once. With that motivation gone, both sought what was believed to be an appearance fee of around \$100,000 (£61,000) to compete at a meeting where the total budget is around 5.6m Swiss francs – slightly below \$3m.

While such money might have been paid in previous years, the organisers of Golden League meetings are now tied in to a less flexible structure. It was no go – and no show.

But Emanuel Hudson, Greene and Boldon's manager, said yesterday that the scales had tilted too far in the other direction. "The IAAF have put a carrot out there that is basically impossible for anyone to get," he said.

What are the chances of Maurice or Ato winning all seven races against all the other top sprinters? The IAAF have decided they are going to spend less money on the athletes and keep more themselves."

Given the timing of the dispute, the comments yesterday of the IAAF president, Primo Nebiolo – with the IAAF Golden League champion, Michael Johnson, in the lead – are particularly galling.

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But Emanuel Hudson, Greene and Boldon's manager, said yesterday

WEDNESDAY REVIEW

COMMENT • FEATURES • ARTS • LISTINGS • TELEVISION



Andrew Hunterman

Typical. You wait years for an article about you. Then 20 turn up at once

No, Magnus Mills hasn't sold his novel for a million pounds and Thomas Pynchon didn't telephone at 3am to say how wonderful it was. But he has written one and, yes, he really is a London bus-driver

Brixton bus garage had never seen anything like it. Like a latter-day south London Alamo, it was besieged on Monday by a force of hacks and snappers. Reporters were mobbing the cab of a 137 Routemaster bound for Oxford Circus, desperate for a word with the driver, who had had to sneak in to work via the back entrance to avoid the rat pack out front. To them, Magnus Mills was Clark Kent made flesh: bus driver by day, millionaire novelist by night.

"They didn't realise I couldn't possibly sit in the bus and pose," Mills recalls. "As I was rolling out, I told them, 'I've got to leave here at exactly 21 minutes to three. I can't leave early or late.' The press are always the first to complain if we're late. As I drove out, I saw that the photographers had all parked on the red route, blocking the way."

Such are the perils of becoming an overnight sensation in the middle of August. The Blair's are sequestered in the Casa Senza Paparazzi. William Hague has taken his baseball cap to a vacation in the States. Even Peter Mandelson's Ministry of Spice is having a break. It is at these moments that a news editor's thoughts turn from the sublime to the ridiculous, and grateful journalists leap on space-filling stories of flesh-eating bugs and deadly Euro-wasp. The British summer is marked by certain ancient institutions: Wimbledon, Henley and the Silly Season.

So what could fit more snugly into those acres of stories about house-destroying termites and vicious razorshears than the scarcely credible tale of the 44-year-old novel-writing bus driver whose debut work has been sold for "a cool £1m" and is already being developed into a movie? Surely that one has "Silly Season" running through it like the word "Brighton" in a stick of rock? Cue reams of tired jokes along the lines of "any more fees please?" and "How much is a ticket to Hollywood? One million pounds?"

Mills is not impressed with the precision of much of the reporting. Truth is the first casualty of the Silly Season. Far from the suggested £1m, he has so far received an advance of £10,000 from Flamingo, \$5,000 from his American publishers, 20,000 francs from French imprint and "under £10,000" from a production company, Apocalypse Film, for a movie option. (Of course, that figure would rise substantially if the film went into production and, say, Leonardo DiCaprio decided to play one of the leads.)

The other thing that most reporters missed was that *The Restraint of Beasts* is a serious literary endeavour. Mills has not penned a knockabout novelisation of *On the Buses* – all wolf-whistling, chirpy Cockney conductors and fist-waving inspectors. He has written a spare and original black comedy about Tam and Richie, two work-shy rural fence-builders who leave murder and mayhem behind them wherever they ply their trade. Mills is keen to stress that "there are no detective inspectors or hospitals or any of that crap you get in modern novels."

The book has a deceptive simplicity, the author says that "unless like most novelists, I don't venture into analysing people's feelings – that's knocked half the potential readership on the head." It is also infused with a slow-burning wit. Lines take time to detonate. "I looked at her," Mills writes, "and realised that underneath all her clothes, she was completely naked."

The Restraint of Beasts has already been put forward by its publishers, Flamingo, for the Booker Prize. Word of mouth on the novel, to be published next month both here and in the US, has likened Mills to Kazuo Ishiguro and Paul Auster. One critic described this "a work of sinister brilliance". Its American publisher has dubbed it "Macbeth as filmed by the Coen Brothers."

Philip Gwyn Jones, the editorial director at Flamingo, who won a bidding war for the book, is obviously an interested party, but he talks with real enthusiasm about Mills's "extraordinarily distinctive prose style". "It's not boastful or swaggering in the off-putting way that a lot of first novels are. It's very plain, which is unusual in this day and age. He uses few adjectives or adverbs. It's reminiscent of Beckett and Pinter. Magnus is a craftsman; regards driving a bus as a craft."

"It has a lovely rhythm of its own. There are no nocturnal monologues, no philosophising, and nothing that badges the book as

the national press. He has been invited to appear on everything from GMTV to London Tonight. His phone has gone "every 20 seconds", and on Monday alone his PR had more than 50 requests to speak to the "bookish bus-driver".

He has cast doubts on those press reports that claim he will carry on regardless as a bus driver (he alternates between the 137 from Streatham to Oxford Circus and the 159 between Brixton and Oxford Circus). After leaving Wolverhampton Poly some 20 years ago, Mills worked for six years as a fence-builder – a job that provided vital background information for the novel – and has spent the last 12 years on the buses. He wrote the book over two-and-a-half years between "spread-over" shifts (nine hours' work spread over 12 hours). A keen runner, cyclist and sailor, he has enviable reserves of energy; he gamely talked to me for an hour after a particularly hot and gruelling spread-over. "Bus-driving is just a job. I could do it with my eyes shut – although I don't," he deadpans. "Most of my friends at work have been very supportive. All I've had is people coming up to me and saying, 'well done'. They think I've got a ticket to a better life. Bus-driving may look like an Ealing comedy, but it's pretty rough to do in week in, week out in an inner-city garage. I like the idea of going up to some hillside on a motorbike and watching someone direct my story. But I might get in the way."

"It would be nice not to have to do nine hours a day at the bus garage. If they said, 'ring in at six in the morning and we'll see if we've got a bus that needs taking out', that would be ideal. But you don't get personal freedom if you work for someone. As a writer you can have a fantasy world – 'Till work later, but I'll have me breakfast first'."

For all that, Mills pays tribute to his bus garage manager, who's been "very generous. He could have thought he had all his shifts straight and then along comes this driver who's written a novel and says, 'I need today off because I'm going to be interviewed by a national newspaper.' But he says they're not going to stand in my way, as long as I don't take the piss. It is good publicity for the bus company," I'll say.

But won't all this attention change Mills? He himself admits that "when I first met the film producer, I was all starry-eyed. One minute I'm a bus driver, the next they're making my film." Friends, however, reckon he'll cope. They consider him "extraordinarily level-headed". According to Gwyn Jones, "Magnus is an unusual chap. He has a finely honed sense of the absurd, so I hope he'll find all this Silly Season stuff entertaining. He's an accidental celebrity, and that will please him."

So far the only perceptible change after the torrent of hype is Mills's answering-machine message: it now plays a snatch from The Beatles' "Paperback Writer".

The Restraint of Beasts is published by Flamingo on 7 September

**It's where
the
Hunchback
hung out.**

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**FINANCE &
SECRETARIAL**

Turbulent bishops

Sir: What a shock for Clare Garner to be confronted, in the Nigerian Bishop Chukwuma, by a cleric who did not conform to the preferred English stereotype of a "nice" but ineffectual do-gooder who would seldom dare to disagree with a journalist, let alone wag a finger at one ("How I felt the wrath of a bishop", 6 August) – someone who would never have a real opinion but just utter a few meaningless and out-of-touch platitudes.

This incident was symbolic of a culture clash that runs deep. It is fashionable to listen to the experience of representatives of the Developing World, but somewhat disconcerting when they say that the First World doesn't really want to hear and in a manner which is "just not cricket". How difficult! Should we just go back to a more imperialistic approach? It would make things so much easier.

What the Anglican communion has just done is something very brave of which liberal Western journalists should surely approve: it gathered together representatives of its organisation from all over the world to engage in a truly democratic consultative exercise in which the First World did not have unfair influence. But then, oh dear! They said all the right things about debt and lots of other issues but not about homosexuality! Oh well, at least it made for a good controversial front-page article which might make the church look a bit silly. Sigh of relief... we can indulge our prejudices against the church after all.

Canon JOHN INGE

Ely Cathedral

Sir: Perhaps we should not wonder at the attitudes of the Anglican bishops towards homosexuality if we consider the blindingly obvious fact which is their single uniting feature: they are virtually all men. And modern heterosexual men seem to be innately afraid of homosexual men, for whatever reason.

The bishops themselves may consider that their principal uniting feature is their Christianity. Their comments last week, such as those made in your own "Right to Reply" (6 August) have not shown much evidence of the traditional Christian values of acceptance, love and forgiveness. If man was made in God's image, then so was woman. If this is the case then God has no gender, and therefore neither does He have sexual orientation. We cannot therefore claim that homosexual sex defames God's image.

If we are to believe in God at all, we must believe that God loves everyone equally. Being a Christian is out about who you sleep with and how, it is a moral attitude, and should be one which embraces all of our fellow human beings.

ALISON PICKUP
Knightley, West Yorkshire

Sir: Trevor Phillips (Comment, 10 August) contrasts Islam in Africa – "this ancient religion" – with "the imported Christian faith". Perhaps Mr Phillips means only that the Anglican variety of Christianity is "imported" to Africa? He has, surely, heard of the Cope and the Ethiopian Church? He is, surely, aware that Christian faith was widespread throughout North Africa for several centuries before the birth of the prophet Muhammad? And can it really be true that up until last week the only African bishops Mr Phillips had heard of were Trevor Huddleston and Desmond Tutu? An *Independent* columnist, commenting on religious affairs, who has never heard of St Augustine? Good grief!

JOHN COSGROVE

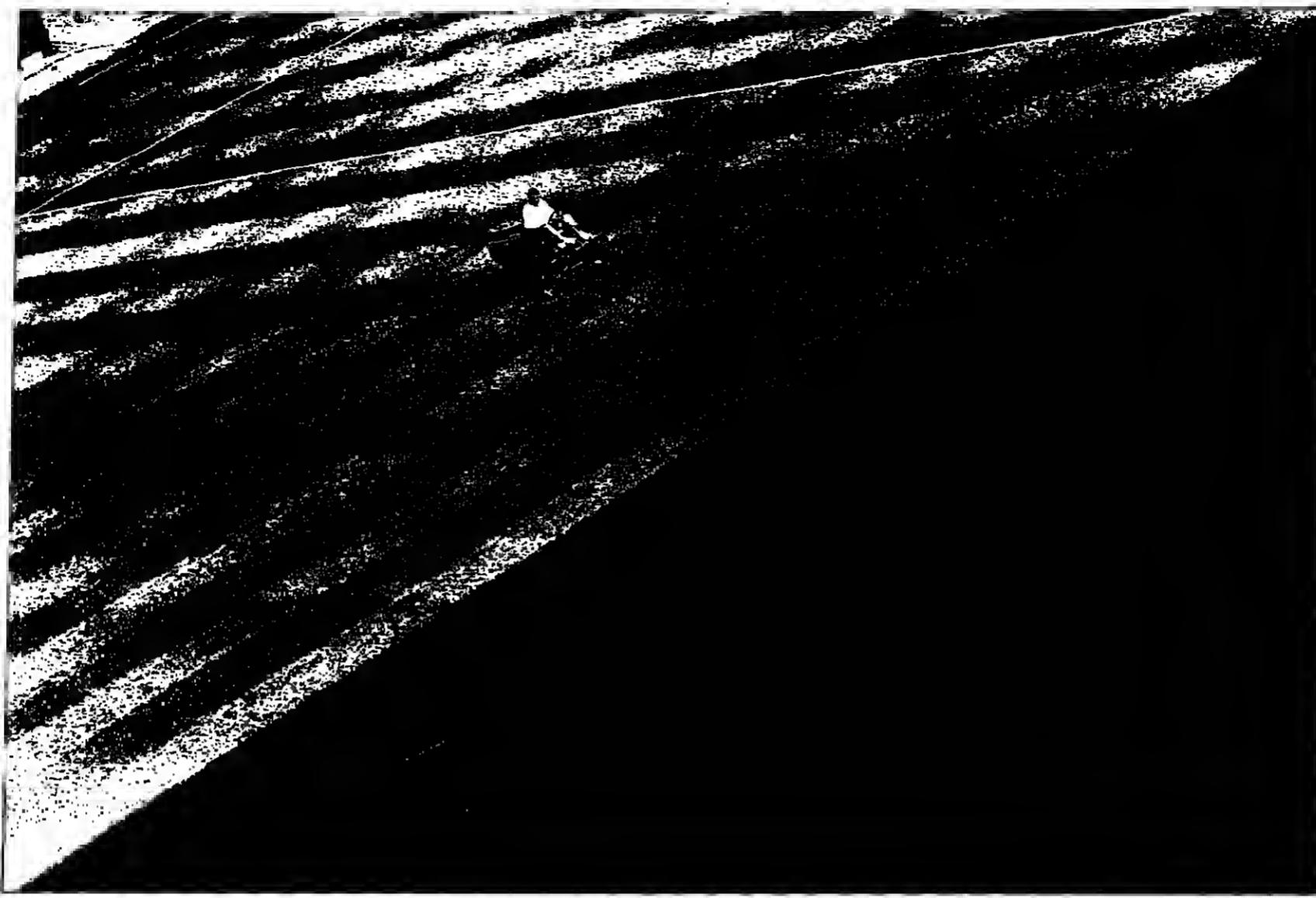
Camborne, Cornwall

Police and CS gas

Sir: The National Schizophrenia Fellowship has worked with over 4,000 police officers on how to approach people during a mental health crisis.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Post letters to Letters to the Editor and include a daytime telephone number, fax to 0171 293 2056 or e-mail to letters@independent.co.uk
E-mail correspondents are asked to give a postal address. Letters may be edited for length and clarity



Cutting the pitch at Charlton Athletic FC

Brian Harris

All our evidence supports the fears now being raised across the mental health spectrum over the increased use by the police of CS gas in the restraint of the people known to have a severe mental illness. ("Man's death raises alarm over police use of CS spray", 11 August).

Present police guidelines on the use of CS gas are inadequate, particularly when its immediate and long-term effects on people with a severe mental illness are so poorly understood.

In pre-deployment trials, carried out in 16 police forces in the spring of 1996, CS gas was found to be "least likely to be seen as effective on those believed to be suffering from a mental disturbance". The report of those trials also noted that, of 59 people found to have relevant pre-existing medical conditions, such as asthma and epilepsy, only the person with schizophrenia was advised to seek further treatment for the after-effects of CS gas.

Deployment has seen CS gas develop into the preferred method of restraint in many police forces. It is not surprising, but it is still shocking, that increased use of CS gas against people suffering a mental health crisis should throw up more incidents of serious injury and even death.

The failings of community care have put the police in the front line of dealing with mental health crises 24 hours a day. They need the best training based on clear guidelines to protect the mentally ill, the police and the health staff.

We know that the solvent used in CS spray acts directly on the nervous system. CS gas itself can cause heart problems, exacerbating the cardiac side-effects of some drug treatments for schizophrenia. The full interaction with psychiatric drugs is unknown but potentially very dangerous.

The Association of Chief Police

Officers' guidelines on the use of CS gas need to be urgently reviewed and tightened up.

There should also be a full review of the use of CS gas on people known to have a severe mental illness, taking on board the experiences of not only the police and the mental health professionals, but also people with a severe mental illness and their carers.

CLIFF PRIOR
Chief Executive
National Schizophrenia
Fellowship

Children in prison

Sir: We wholeheartedly endorse the views expressed by Fran Russell and Professor Robert Pritchard (letter, 10 August) about the detention of children in prison.

We would like to draw attention, in particular, to the continued remanding to prison of children who remain unconvicted of any crime, the majority of whom do not subsequently receive a custodial sentence. They are held in conditions which are significantly worse than any sentenced prisoner, locked up for 23 hours

per day, denied proper access to education and health care, without recourse to the basic protection afforded under the Children Act 1989.

In 1991 the Conservative government pledged to remove remanded 15- and 16-year-old children from the prison system but failed to honour this commitment, and the numbers of children held on remand have doubled, with over 2,000 boys being remanded to custody each year. The Crime and Disorder Act signals the end of that commitment, with courts being allowed to send a boy of 15 or 16 to secure accommodation only where they are deemed to be "vulnerable" within a restrictive definition supplied by the Act and where a vacancy exists within a secure unit. Having read Professor Pritchard's eloquent description of custody the question is, surely, which child is not vulnerable in these circumstances?

The Children's Society Remand Rescue Initiative attempts to find alternatives for children to a custodial remand. Unfortunately, the lack of spaces in secure accommodation and the limited

availability of bail support and remand fostering schemes hamper our success. In addition, the Government's failure to challenge the prevailing attitude that "prison works" does little to help the situation. We believe that it is time for the Government to admit that prison is an expensive, ineffective and dangerous environment for children and renew its commitment to removing this group of children from prison custody.

SHARON MOORE

National Co-ordinator
JUSTINE ASHTON

Senior Practitioner
The Children's Society Remand
Rescue Initiative
Stafford

Loss of memory

Sir: Those experiencing memory loss should not be misled into believing that it is part of the "normal process of ageing" ("I've lost my keys... I'm going mad", Review, 4 August).

Our mental processes may slow down as we get older. This does not account for serious memory loss experienced by those who have

dementia – a disease which now affects more than 700,000 people in the UK, 17,000 of whom are under 65.

The claim that "normal age-associated memory impairment" can be distinguished from dementia because those with dementia will often become "irritable, withdrawn, rude, scruffy, idle or suspicious" is complete nonsense.

Some of these characteristics may be exhibited as dementia develops, but by far the most common early symptom is forgetfulness – too often dismissed as a natural part of the ageing process.

To encourage a misunderstanding of memory problems could prevent some people from seeking early diagnosis and, with the advent of the first anti-dementia treatments, from receiving drugs which may help them cope with the disease.

REBECCA GRAY

Alzheimer's Disease Society

London SW1

Civilised squares

Sir: The recently published White Paper on Integral transport clearly reflects a growing public desire for policies that can restrain car use, but perhaps more importantly, encourage walking, cycling and use of public transport.

That the public is willing to accept change and see restraint of the private car is evidenced through overwhelming public support for the initiative to reclaim large parts of Trafalgar Square, Whitehall and Parliament Square as part of the World Squares initiative.

If there was ever a time when central government and local government should work together to clearly demonstrate a commitment to creating a civilised core for our capital city, then this is it. The implementation of the World Squares initiative would send a clear message throughout London and the UK that the Government means business. We therefore urge the Government and Westminster City Council to take the bold initiatives necessary and to transform the centre of London into a shining example of what can and should be achieved in the redesign of our cities.

JEREMY ILES

Regional Manager

Sustrans

Bristol

IN BRIEF

the five ancient Scottish Universities have awarded an MA as a first degree for centuries. And given the dubious quality of the education provided by many of the newer institutions they will be well justified in continuing to differentiate their superior product.

JOHN O'BRIEN
Morpeth, Northumberland

Sir: Your report "Panic in Devvo as 800 cut by razor shells" (10 August) comments that the unusually low tide was due to hot weather. The low tides found all

around the coast of the UK last weekend are entirely predictable and more to do with the moon than the sunny hot weather. Such tides are called "spring tides".

JOHN CHAMPION

Castle Eaton, Wiltshire

Sir: If Viagra must be available only through the NHS, perhaps doctors should issue their patients with repeat prescriptions – for one dose at a time. With prescription charges at £5.80 a go, the costs would balance out neatly. Men could scarcely claim they are too up.

ROBERT MULLAN
Wellingford, Oxfordshire

and Mark as hard-working over-lapping wing-backs, John as the mercurial playmaker and good Old Peter as the big, lion-hearted striker in the number nine shirt?

For younger religious consumers not won over by the football analogy, further changes might be introduced to the Book of Common Prayer to make it more accessible to those raised on soaps and sitcoms. Prayers deemed convoluted and lengthy could usefully be truncated into modern speech: "We have left undone those things which we ought to have done and we have plainly said 'blah'." A similar updating of congregation responses into teenspeak – "Lord have mercy upon us" – "Yeah, whatever" – might also be considered.

There remains the tricky question of the supreme leadership.

While even the most daring marketing consultant would avoid changes to the basic hierarchy, the character of the Holy Ghost, always something of a shadowy figure, might usefully be developed. Fortunately the ideal candidate has already passed an audition, by playing the godhead with triumphant godliness in Randy Newman's superb musical *Faust*. There are those who will object to the elevation of veteran singer-songwriter James Taylor, particularly in view of his American citizenship, but his presence would reassure traditionalists and ageing hippies. Who could doubt that this saintly man would be the perfect divine presence to take the Church of England into the next millennium?

Miles Kington is on holiday

James Taylor, the C of E's answer to the credit-card rosary

IT DIDN'T go terribly well, did it? Sincere, befuddled middle-aged men on *Newsnight*. Day after day of earnest discussion about whether God approves of men going to bed together. Nigerian bishops becoming involved in street brawls with members of the pink party. Doctrinally the Lambeth Conference may have been a hit, but out here in the real world it was nothing but an embarrassment.

But then the real world has probably always been the problem. Developing a cackling five-minute metaphor on *Thought for the Day* or comforting a nation in grief, bishops are in their element. Confronted by the everyday – kids, relationships, the new ladettes – suddenly they seem as endearing but pointless as a character in a second-rate Fifties film.

Yet, as the fog of millennial angst and moral panic descends, the competition among those offering the way, the truth and the light has never been more intense. Last week the Roman Catholic church unveiled a new style of rosary for the Christian in a hurry. Shaped like a credit card, this neat spiritual aid will contain embossed points corresponding to the traditional beads, so the busy worshippers will be able to knock off the odd Hail Mary or contemplate the Stations of the Cross while sitting in a traffic jam or queuing at the check-out. Divine PIN numbers will facilitate individualised entry to the Kingdom of Heaven are said to be under urgent consideration.

Admittedly, Christian modernisers have gone some way to making the word more acceptable – conveniently blurring the concepts of God and Good, for example



TERENCE BLACKER

By a divine stroke of fortune, the disciples form an entire football team with a substitute

– but the problems remain. While the Government prescribes a perfectly balanced team, with the

cosies (Dobson, Mowlam) on one side, the nasties (Mandelson, Campbell) on the other and the grinning, beauteous supreme being between them, the Church has a disastrously blurred image.

So where will it find the key to modernisation, a homegrown version

of the credit-card rosary?

Football may help. Once sexist, mud-splattered and violent, the game has been transformed into a sunny, middle-class enthusiasm for all the family. The fact that, by a divine stroke of good fortune, the disciples form an entire team with a substitute is surely a gift for the image-makers. What could be more amusing and natural than to accentuate the somewhat ill-defined image of Jesus's followers by reinventing them as celebrities in a celestial team, with Matthew

and Mark as hard-working over-lapping wing-backs, John as the mercurial playmaker and good Old Peter as the big, lion-hearted striker in the number nine shirt?

For younger religious consumers not won over by the football analogy, further changes might be introduced to the Book of Common Prayer to make it more accessible to those raised on soaps and sitcoms. Prayers deemed convoluted and lengthy could usefully be truncated into modern speech: "We have left undone those things which we ought to have done and we have plainly said 'blah'." A similar updating of congregation responses into teenspeak – "Lord have mercy upon us" – "Yeah, whatever" – might also be considered.

There remains the tricky question of the supreme leadership.

Miles Kington is on holiday

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When it comes to pornography, err on the liberal side

BRITAIN'S CHIEF censor, James Ferman, is to retire shortly, with a successor expected by September. His final report for the British Board of Film Classification highlights the explosion in the market for violent pornography over recent years. Mr Ferman has come in for a great deal of criticism in his time, but he has walked the line between philosophical libertarianism and the tabloid-style bulwark of prurient disapproval for 23 years with what is, in the final analysis, a large degree of success.

Mr Ferman is now 67 years old. Since his tenure at the BBFC began in the early Seventies, its work has greatly expanded because of the Video Recordings Act of 1984. Between 300 and 400 cinema films are still submitted each year, but alongside them now sit between 3,000 and 4,000 video films demanding attention.

Yet, at the same time, the percentage of films that, in the minds of the censors, require cuts has dropped dramatically, from 33 per cent in 1970 to only 4 per cent in 1997. And the reasons for this are by no means as straightforward as they may at first appear.

Anyone who looks closely will realise that public taste has changed during that time – and it has largely, but not uniformly, become more liberal. There is no reason why this should be surprising. Although voices in public are most often heard condemning what is perceived as a decline in public morality, it is difficult not to regard this as a function of personal ageing rather than a sharp reflection on society. After all, the Victorian age was more morally restrictive than what came before it, as well as what came after it. These things must be cyclical if they are to mean anything.

It seems clear that the public's attitude towards sexual violence changed at the same time as women's place in the public sphere became consolidated. The associated phenomenon of political correctness has also played a role, not only in changing people's idea of what is acceptable, but also in the film-makers' choices about what to include and what to leave out.

Think about the character of many of Burt Reynolds's movies (it is often forgotten now that he was the highest-paid movie star of the Seventies), and the lessening acceptability of the casual slap to calm down a hysterical woman. Come to think of it, what about the lessening acceptability of hysterical women on screen? These days, she is not only a pathetic creature, she is also a bad role model.



On the issues of sex and violence separately, things are even less clear-cut. While adults are, thankfully, more tolerant now of consensual sex depicted on screen, there has been a decline in screen violence arriving at the censor's office because many of the stars whose images promoted it (Schwarzenegger, Willis, Stallone) have reached middle age, got married, had children and – surprise, surprise – embraced family values.

But where children are involved as viewers, value judgements that are not market-led must be still be made. Minors are, by definition, in the process of constructing their moral framework. Like the expert who knows all the arguments in his field, it is possible to have

too much information to find it possible to impose any kind of order on it. This is why children should not be encouraged to absorb television indiscriminately, roam the Internet unsupervised, or watch anything they please on video. However, we all know that the march of technology makes it difficult for even the most solicitous parent to police this effectively.

The expansion of the black market in violent pornography is itself a testament to the changes that have taken place in public morality over the past 23 years – what can't be bought legitimately goes underground. There is nothing new under the sun; there are just new ways of delivering it.

Don't let music become an élitist pastime

THE PROMS began 103 years ago with the intention of allowing the masses to enjoy an evening's musical entertainment at a reasonable price. Today, the prices are still reasonable. But, on Monday a man interrupted an Albert Hall performance of *Corsair* by Oliver Knussen, which was also being broadcast on Radio 3, to shower the audience with leaflets proclaiming that the Proms are élitist and run by a cultural cabal.

The man in question clearly had a highly personal motive, but his act of agitprop provoked the realisation of a wider truth. Classical music in this country has become more, not less, élitist in recent years.

If you need proof (tired as it sounds, but bear with the argument) look no further initially than the price of concerts, state-subsidised or otherwise. Many tickets at the Royal Opera House, English National Opera and Glyndebourne, to name those with the highest profile, are all well beyond the pocket of your average punter – if they want to go.

But the erosion of peripatetic music teaching in state schools, for many years an opportunity for children from average backgrounds to learn to play one of the instruments in the classical tradition, means that the average punter is less likely with every passing year to take an interest. Even if things begin to change now, there is still an entire generation of school leavers who never had the opportunity to learn.

Also, radio stations where classical music is most consistently exposed, Classic FM and Radio 3, are running down their own product by packaging it in soundbite-sized, dumbed-down sections. And then only if it happens to be Mozart or the *Coriolan* *Burana*.

Never mind "Roll Over Beethoven". Handel must be gavotting in his grave.

A model nation?

IT IS in some ways a pity that Nevis has not voted for full independence from St Kitts. This bid for national status with a seat at the UN just like the US and China, had a *Mouse that Roared*, brave, romantic feel. But it was also a model for secessionists everywhere. The referendum on independence set a suitably high (two-thirds) threshold for change. The new micro-state would have continued in a currency union with other small nations with the Eastern Caribbean dollar. It would have joined Caricom and kept its economic links with bigger neighbours such as Jamaica. Thus political independence can sit alongside economic union. Can we learn something from our former colony?

Wanted: financial advice that is genuinely independent

THE MOST dangerous market for consumers is financial services. Part of the difficulty is that the sellers seem so respectable – companies such as Northern Rock, once an old-fashioned building society; Legal & General, a byword in the City for caution; Prudential Assurance, who gave us the phrase "the man from the Pru".

Yet Northern Rock has just had to pay out £3m in backdated interest to customers who complained that they had not been warned about changes to their savings account. Legal & General has set aside £600m to compensate victims of the pension mis-selling scandal.

And the Prudential? After it had earmarked £1.1bn to compensate 190,000 customers who were sold inappropriate pension schemes, this week comes evidence that its sales people are still selling unsuitable policies. The chief executive, Sir Peter Davis, was reported to be breaking his holiday to handle the incipient crisis.

As a safeguard, financial institutions employ compliance officers to make sure that sales staff follow their rules. The Pru's "compliance director" said he was confident that the mis-sold policies would have been spotted. In fact, I think the whole process of "compliance" devalues as much as it protects. It misleads managers of financial institutions into thinking that their sales forces are well controlled, and it falsely reassures customers.

The reality is this. Sales people always focus on selling those products that earn them the highest commission. Commission rates are set by management. Thus when customers are sold inappropriate pension schemes or other financial products,

the entire blame should be directed at managers, and at the board of directors above them.

As it happens, the Pru is in the process of changing its commission structure to one that provides more reward for achieving a long-term relationship with the customer. This confirms that the key determinant of sales force activity is how management sets the commission structure. And that in turn is why it is appropriate that the police are investigating the actions of certain insurance company directors. Given that as many as 2 million people may have been mis-sold pension policies, it would be astonishing if nobody ended up in court.

More than in any other industry, there seems to be a wide divergence between the interests of the producers (in this case the producers of financial services) and the customers. The reason why this wide difference has developed is the difficulty customers have in assessing quickly whether they have bought the right financial service or product.

Typically there may be a gap of 20 to 30 years between the first payment of premiums into a pension scheme, and retirement. As far as life assurance is concerned, terms of 10, 15 and 20 years are common. Investors in the stock-market, whether directly or through unit trusts, are told to look at least five years ahead. And even when the moment of truth is reached and the first pension payments are received, or the life policy matures, few people think it worthwhile to find out whether their original decision was wise; it is far too late to put it right.

Of course, league tables of past performance are common, and much

used by sales people when it suits their case. But knowing today, say, which life assurance companies have produced the best results for policies arranged 20 years ago is not much of a guide to how a new policy, started this year, will perform between now and 2018.

For these reasons, purchasers of financial products have great difficulty in establishing whether they have been well or badly served. In response, the Government is mounting a massive advertising campaign to alert recent buyers of pension products to the possibility that they may have been misled.

What improvements to this unsatisfactory state of affairs can be proposed? In the first place, financial institutions can be structured so as to close the gap between the interests of the company and those of customers.

These are mutual societies. Many were founded in the 19th century. They are organised on the footing that the customers themselves own the institution. Many of them are household names, such as Scottish Widows and Standard Life. Until a few years ago, all building societies were mutual organisations, but members, seeing that handsome reserves had been built up over the years, have in many cases chosen to convert their institutions into banks and grab the surplus. The Nationwide building society has just avoided this fate.

I have recently become a non-executive director of a mutual organisation, the Tunbridge Wells Equitable Friendly Society. When I stood for election to the board at the annual meeting in June, I was asked to make a speech outlining my views about the friendly society movement and the society itself. The audience comprised the society's customers, not shareholders. It was they who would elect me or not. Indeed the society does not refer to customers as such; instead they are called "members". There is a unity of purpose, that is why Frank Field, when he was a government minister, constantly espoused the virtues of mutual organisations.

I realise that shareholder-owned financial institutions cannot be changed back into mutual societies. But the Government can encourage mutual societies in many ways, particularly with regard to taxation.

The trouble with financial regulation is that the financial services market is, in one important respect, back-to-front. So-called independent financial advisers, a sector that con-

trols 55 per cent of the market in investment and insurance products, are remunerated not by the customers but by the financial institutions themselves.

In a perfect world, independent financial advisers would act as agents, seeking out the best deal according to individual circumstances, and charging a fee for the work, as a solicitor or an accountant does. In such a scenario, mis-selling of pension plans would be rare, if not unknown. But, in practice, independent financial advisers are remunerated by commission from the companies whose products they recommend. Consequently, the best way for an insurance company to raise the sales of its financial products is to increase the commission it is willing to pay – regardless of what its past record may be.

Financial regulation has no power to correct this distortion. At the very least, while this system persists, financial advisers should be forbidden to describe themselves as independent. "Independent" is precisely what they are not.

In short, the financial services market is going to remain treacherous. If readers will forgive a self-interested plea, I think much the best advice is to be found in the financial pages of the newspapers themselves. I would rather read Nic Cillit in *The Independent*, or Gillian O'Connor on the back of the *Financial Times* on Saturdays, or Lorna Burke in *The Sunday Telegraph*, than put myself into the hands of an independent financial adviser. Indeed, I couldn't do it.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"I have calculated that the risk is about one in five million if you drink a glass of milk."

Dr Norman Simmons,
government food safety adviser

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"How can you expect a man who's warm to understand one who's cold?"

Solon,
Athenian statesman and poet

Chips are fried twice.

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MONITOR

ALL THE NEWS OF THE WORLD
Opinion on the victory of the
Taliban in Afghanistan



hasn't performed anything spectacular in the realm of economy, it is time for him to show some mettle and bring the Afghan policy back into the control of the Foreign Office. *Frontline Post, Pakistan*

The world has not evolved a coherent response to the Taliban challenge. The European Union has suspended aid, and foreign aid workers left Kabul when the Taliban ordered them to move to an uninhabitable dormitory or leave. *Straits Times, Singapore*

It is fashionable to say that there should be a broad-based regime in Afghanistan but the search for such a regime has gone on for the last decade and a half during which time Afghanistan has known nothing but misery and the ravages of war. It is only the Taliban who have had the strength and the singleness of purpose to create some order out of the Afghan chaos. Not everyone may like their methods or their ultra-conservative ideology but then the growth and rise of the Tal-

iban are responses to a peculiar situation. There was a vacuum in the country which the Taliban have filled. As for their hard ideology, that is something which only time can temper and perhaps modify. *Dawn, Pakistan*

The civil war in neighbouring Afghanistan has entered a new phase with the dice this time loaded in favour of the Taliban. Pakistan's traditional ally, Iran, would not approve of the battlefield advances now being made

PANDORA

AFTER CHRIS Patten's book about Hong Kong was dropped by Rupert Murdoch's HarperCollins earlier this year, a number of the company's authors announced their own sympathetic departures. Meanwhile, the literary world has been waiting to see what the reaction would be from Jung Chang, whose autobiography, *Wild Swans*, has earned HarperCollins a small fortune. Now Pandora has learned that Jung Chang is defecting to Random House, whose new German owners must be gleeful over the prospect of publishing Jung Chang's next book - a definitive biography of Chairman Mao. However, this loss might not really bother Chairman Murdoch, as his friends in Peking are known to be cool to the idea of resurrecting Mao's legend at this time.

AS THE eyes of the world focus on President Clinton's Zippergate crisis, it is highly educational to learn how different cultures interpret his problems with the former White House intern Monica Lewinsky. Take, for example, the view from the Gulf, as expressed in a recent issue of Bahrain's distinguished newspaper *Akhbar Al-Khij*. "Is she a prostitute looking for a market after she failed to find it at the White House? Is she a bait dropped by the CIA to damage the picture of the President because he crossed the red line? Is she an element of a foreign intelligence party, perhaps Israel, recruited to shake the White House because its occupant said no to something it asked for?" Pandora has carefully considered all three of these highly plausible explanations but, with reluctance, cannot believe them. Still, what is this "red line" that Clinton has allegedly crossed? Your suggestions on a postcard please.

AS THE fires blaze across heat-stricken Cyprus,

incinerating part of the British military base at Episkop, at least two of Westminster's most important personages are taking a highly personal interest. The Speaker of the House Betty Boothroyd and Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott are planning to holiday on the island later this month. And, as if Boothroyd's nerves weren't frayed enough, Monday brought tragic news of the death of a British mother during a para-sailing accident in the Greek islands. As Pandora's readers will know, para-sailing is one of the Speaker's favourite holiday pastimes. Please, Betty, give the island - and the chute - a miss this year.

LATE MONDAY afternoon a faxed notice arrived on Pandora's desk hyping a fabulous party to be held that evening in celebration of the new Warner Brothers film, *The Avengers*. Telephone numbers were given and Pandora (always the party animal) was on the phone in a flash, only to be told the party was going to be so glittering and so crowded that no more press invitations were available. Poor Pandora.

The *Avengers* - strongly rumoured to be a cinematic disappointment - produced a party that disappointed anyone who believed the hype. Neither the film's cast nor most of the promised celebrities showed. David Bowie, for example, wasn't there but, unsurprisingly, the C-list celeb Derek Draper was. A follow-up call to Aurelia Public Relations yesterday found its spokeswoman saying: "You should know that we were representing the venue where it was held, not Warner Brothers." It seems Pandora's readers didn't miss much, so the club will go nameless here.

SPEAKING OF names, has the BBC made a mistake in continuing to call this season's travel series *Holiday Heaven?* It claims to take celebrities and "let them loose in their favourite holiday resort", but the press release sent out yesterday paints a different picture. Not only is David Mellor going to be tramping around Ravello, and David Gower forced to drink a bottle of port made from grapes he stamped on nine years ago on his last visit to Oporto, but poor *EastEnders* star Michelle Collins (left) is being taken back to Romania. On her last visit, she had her camera confiscated by the police; this year her passport was stolen, and she is the victim of an extortionist's phone calls. Sounds more like *Holiday Hell*.



SO NEVIS, verdant birthplace of Alexander Hamilton and once favoured holiday destination of Diana, Princess of Wales, has narrowly escaped independence. In a vote on Monday, 62 per cent of Nevisians voted in favour of secession from their larger sister island of St Kitts. Had they succeeded, they would have made Nevis one of the smallest independent nations in the world. Just 67 per cent was needed to carry the motion.

Nevis is a mountainous island at the top of the Lesser Antilles chain in the Caribbean. It has a population of 9,000 inhabitants, only 4,000 of whom voted on the issue. Its main sources of revenue are as a budding financial centre and an upmarket tourist destination - it possesses a number of hotels fashioned from former plantation "great houses" - one, in particular, Montpelier, where, I think, Diana stayed, once belonged to the uncle of Fanny Nisbet, Nelson's wife, and their wedding ceremony in 1787 was held there.

Nevis, in the 18th century, was, according to Nelson's biographer, Tom Pocock, unlike the other British islands in being richer and more

fashionable, and its merchants and planters more arrogant.

In 1987, celebrations were held in Nevis to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the Nelson/Misbet wedding, with participants in 18th-century dress. The Nelson museum in Nevis contains, among other Nelson memorabilia, the dress "created" by the late Mrs Louis Bjorstad (Marjorie) for the event.

The "Horatio" costume of her partner had been made by a tailor in Charlestown, the island's capital. There is also a photograph of the pair in full kit.

St Kitts used to be known as the "Mother Colony"; it was the first British colony, settled in 1624, and the Queen remains Head of State. Since independence from Britain in 1983, St Kitts, with a population of 32,000, and Nevis have been joined together as one country. "O land of beauty/our country where peace abounds..." runs the national anthem, though Nevisians insisted on a constitutional clause allowing them to break away, and they have been trying to do so ever since.

But Nevisians complain - with reason - of being treated as second-class citizens. They also object to being tarred with the same brush as their ratcatcher big sister, which has been the centre of a number of drug-related scandals, including the disappearance in 1994 of the Kittitian envoy to the UN with five other people, while out sailing, and the murder of the second son of the then deputy prime minister and his girlfriend. This was followed by the

killing of the senior policeman investigating the case and the subsequent implication of the two remaining sons of the deputy prime minister in their brother's murder and a conspiracy to traffic in cocaine.

"Drugs in the region is a monster and St Kitts-Nevis is a major trans-shipment point for drugs because of our proximity to US markets," Ricky Skerrit, the president told me when I last visited the island four years ago. "Thanks to tourism, transport services are now in place and what is happening in St Kitts is happening or could happen anywhere in the Caribbean." But not, so far, in Nevis, and Nevis wants to keep it that way.

However, drugs are only one reason why Nevis wants independence from St Kitts. A more powerful reason is that, under British rule, the islands were discouraged from getting on with one another in case they should rise up in unity against their colonial masters. Divide and rule was how the British saw it. In consequence, virtually since the abolition of slavery, the Caribbean islands have longed for independence, first from the British, then

from each other. Nevis, like Barbuda (which Diana also liked, and which is a dependency of Antigua), is the victim of a neo-colonial mentality and treated as a poor relation.

Caribbean politics are notoriously volatile: vociferous, passionate, hyperbolic, with little room for compromise. One writer coined the phrase "the traditional bacchae of West Indian politics". The Prime Minister of St Kitts-Nevis, Denzil Douglas, has predicted, with characteristic hyperbole, that "a veritable Pandora's box of problems would come cascading on the people of St Kitts and Nevis, should Nevis secede".

I think he is exaggerating. The problems of the small islands of the Lesser Antilles are much of a muchness: geography, corruption, poverty, an inevitable overdependence on tourism. It's hard to see how the people of Nevis, desperate for the pride and sense of self-worth that independence would bring, could be any worse off.

*Lucretia Stewart is the author of *The Weather Prophet: A Caribbean Journey* (£5.99)*



LUCRETIA STEWART

It's hard to see how the people of Nevis, desperate for independence, could be any worse off

The joy of politics - a chance to upset the spin doctors



KEN LIVINGSTONE
Tony Blair should have enough confidence in party members to overrule the Millbank Tendency

bosses were going to use their resources to try to take control of the new constituency section.

Following newspaper reports that a special unit was to be established by 10 Downing Street to try to influence the election, by employing students to telephone-canvas party members, I raised the issue at the NEC. I was assured that party officials in Millbank Tower would see to it that strict impartiality prevailed in the elections.

When the results of nominations were announced in July, it was clear that, broadly speaking, three slates had emerged. The so-called Labour First group, linked to trade unions such as the engineers and electricians, had six candidates, including a number of trade union officials. With spectacularly bad timing, it advertised its slate in the "cash for access" lobbyist Derek Draper's *Progress* magazine.

A rival establishment-backed group calling itself "Members First" has also emerged. Its slate includes a minor TV celebrity, but it is dominated by retired trade union officials

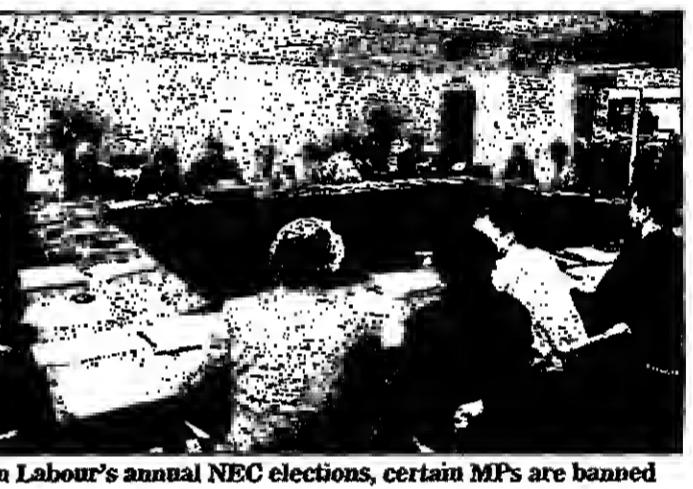
and local government bosses - even though both the unions and local government have their own NEC sections. This new grouping also ran into trouble almost immediately, when it was revealed that its key organiser was Ben Lucas, another former LCC lobbyist named in the "cash for access" affair.

In spite of the assurances we had been given at the NEC, unnamed "Millbank" sources were quoted in the press as backing the new group. Nonetheless, it looks highly possible that the rank and file will have their say, because nearly a third of all the constituency nominations went to candidates associated with the new centre-left grass-roots alliance. Backed by Dennis Skinner, Diane Abbott and myself, they are campaigning to defend the rights of individual members to influence policy and be free to select candidates for parliament and local councils.

With the establishment split on competing slates and a broad centre-left alternative emerging, the elections seemed likely to ensure that at least some socialists would get elected. However, press reports say that Millbank stepped in, this time "to hang heads together", with the result that a number of the competing establishment candidates have withdrawn in order to maximise unity against the centre-left grass-roots alliance.

Millbank spin doctors have tried to paint the alliance as hard left, but in fact it is a remarkably broad coalition. It brings together the mainstream Labour left, with left-of-centre Tribune supporters and people from the traditional "Hattersley-ite" right.

The grass-roots alliance candidates include the Scottish Labour Party executive member Cathy Jamieson, the Tribune editor Mark Seddon, and the Birmingham City



In Labour's annual NEC elections, certain MPs are banned

Councillor Andy Howell, who is also chair of the moderate Labour Reform group. They are standing with Christine Shawcroft and Pete Willis, long-standing campaigners for party democracy. Finally, there is Liz Davies, an early victim of New Labour's infantile control freaks, who, though barred as a parliamentary candidate in Leeds, subsequently proved through a successful libel action that the charges against her were untrue. Of course, she was not reinstated by the party machine.

Tony Blair is going to have a massive majority on the new NEC anyhow. He should have enough confidence in party members to tell the apparatchiks of the Millbank Tendency (whose only background is in student politics) that the party needs critical minds capable of anticipating problems with policies.

This will also be an issue in the parliamentary section, which will be elected at the annual conference. Back in June, Labour MPs were furious to have been approached by government whips and asked to sign nomination papers on which the names of the establishment candidates had already been typed in. The Labour MPs' backbench committee demanded, and secured, a commitment that this part of the NEC election should be elected by secret ballot. Dennis Skinner has been nominated for this section of the NEC by MPs across the spectrum of the party.

On the national executive Dennis Skinner has long been an independent voice, whose astute tactical suggestions have frequently been welcomed by the leadership, even though on other issues he has been in a minority of three with Diane Abbott and myself.

One of the reasons I love politics in general and the Labour Party in particular is that, given the chance, people have the unerring ability to produce results that confound the spin doctors. Both I and Diane Abbott fervently hope that party members are once again going to assert their independence and rights, as they did last year when they elected me instead of Peter Mandelson.

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INDe-7

The unfathomable strangeness of music



PODIUM

GEORGE STEINER
*From the Proms Lecture
by the critic and
academic to the Royal
College of Music,
London*

It is Theodor Herzl listening to *Tannhäuser* who conceives of Wagner in Vienna in the first years of the century. In the queue for performances was the young Hitler. Herzl documents in conversations the decisive, the totally overwhelming impact on him of that music. And in the high tremolo of the strings which is at once technically formidable and so pliable to political imaginings that the very contrary visions are triggered by it, instigated by it.

We are, I think, too close yet

to arrive at any clear judgement.

It is as understandable,

may I please underline, yet trivialising

a response to ban Wagner,

as in the case in Israel, or

to lampoon him in a bizarrely

trashy way in Shostakovich's

"15th Symphony", as it is to

pronounce his music as beyond

any criticism. Our current anx-

world, but please not just now, not just yet. But all he does is to point up the paradox, the unfathomable strangeness of music itself. If you go to the shrine in Jerusalem for the death camps, you can see a photo of an orchestra of Jews playing at the edge of the fire pits as others are driven into it.

A man who knew that photo was the greatest of all modern German poets, Paul Celan. And the poet that wrote in the poem that has become the password to post-war Germany, perhaps to Europe, called the *Death Fugue* - that is a later title. In Celan's own draft it was the *Death Tango*. They are playing a tango.

The Nazis made them play tangos so that those going into the fire pits had a dance-like motion. There was also much orchestral music in the death camps. And in his great *Death Fugue*, a series which is still legendary, Walter Geissel - and I'm told that each note was a year, that no one has ever played Debussy's *Images* as did Geissel - in that hall in Munich one could just hear the cries of those sealed up in the wagons being taken just up the road - it's a

few kilometres to Dachau - and I ask naively why didn't Geissel say no - I can just begin to grasp that - why didn't the audience say no? But why didn't the music say no? And that's the one to which I have no answer. Inevitably our present inheritance reaches deep into the musical past.

Is this compelled retrospection which motivates and makes so deeply unsettling a passage in the incomplete masterpiece of the most profound, the most important of all twentieth century thinkers on music, Adorno. His whole life he worked on a Beethoven book, he did not live to complete it. Within it we find an analysis of the Beethoven 9th. And next to the phrase in the choral movement: "Umschlungen Ihr mütigen", which means "you millions wrapped in each other", arms around each other, circumscribed into a single group. Next to it, he simply puts the words Adolf Hitler. That's Adorno, whose love of Beethoven was beyond anything.

Let us close very simply. Music is far too serious to be left to the politicians.

JPV 11/01/98

Our unhealthy love of milk



JAMES ERLICHMAN

The modern dairy cow is a desperately sad, exploited and biologically dangerous creature

MILK'S IMAGE as healthy, wholesome and nutritious is a modern myth. So, very few microbiologists and animal welfare campaigners will be surprised by the latest news that bacteria in cows' milk have been linked with Crohn's disease, a chronic disorder of the human bowel.

The milk myth is so powerful because its historical pedigree is first class. We do it and other mammals do it - feed our young from birth on breast milk. It contains everything the infant needs. Not only nutrients, but also extra ingredients that boost the baby's immune system and fight infection. It's also true that ancient nomadic people, the hunter-gatherers who preceded modern agriculture, were enthusiastic milk-drinkers. Their milk came from the few sheep and goats who wandered with them. Apart from providing much-needed fat to their scarce diets, milk often provided the only safe and guaranteed source of an even more vital resource - water.

And let's be clear about another thing. Human breast milk is naturally clean because there is a safe distance between the milk bar and the garbage disposal, as it were.

Now, nomadic goats and sheep don't enjoy this advantage. For various reasons their udders lie close to their anuses. But animals on the move don't stand in their own excrement. Contrast these conditions with those of modern, intensive agriculture - and nowhere is the factory farm more relentlessly driven than in Britain and the rest of western Europe. Daisy, the modern dairy cow, is a desperately sad, exploited and biologically dangerous creature.

Daisy is a combined milk and meat machine who drives, and is driven by, modern agribusiness. She got picked for the job because she naturally produces a lot more milk than sheep or goats. Pigs aren't much use either, because they produce so many piglets (up to 14) that there isn't any milk to spare. But Daisy usually has just one calf. In the days of early agriculture there was enough both for her offspring and for the milkmaid to carry back from the fields.

Today we are not content with



The myth of milk - the tradition of school milk has meant that children may have recently drunk the milk of cows that have been fed their own brains

that. Even without genetic engineering modern Daisy has been bred with an enormous udder that virtually drags on the ground. She is capable (sorry, forced) to produce 10,000 litres or more a year. That is 10 times more than her calf could drink - but of course we are so brutal that her calf gets to drink for only a few days before it is taken away.

And where does her calf go? Few people outside the farming world know that Daisy not only produces milk on a mega-scale, she is also the producer of most of the nation's beef found in your local supermarket and butcher's shop.

It works like this. Young Daisy is inseminated because she needs to be in calf to produce milk. The semen normally comes from the beefiest bull available, by artificial insemination. This way the dairy/breeding offspring (boy or girl) will carry as much meat as possible. Out comes the calf to be raised in orphan herds on all manner of things including pellets with beef brain. Until BSE stopped it while Daisy's milk goes to fill the lucrative quotas handed to farmers by the horrendously expensive Common Agricultural Policy.

The result is a stupendous glut

of milk, cheese, fat and beef - all stoked full of saturated fat - the very food that nomads may have craved, but which we couch potatoes need just as desperately to avoid.

Daisy and her inmates are raised in as little ground as possible. They often stand where they defecate. They have no choice and their huge udders sway heavily, collecting dung. I will stop here and admit to being a capitalist omnivore - eating vegetables, meat, eggs and dairy products.

So I have no motive to embellish these awful conditions. I am just embarrassed by them. And if the genetic engineers get their way they will soon be able to inject the hormone, BST, into Daisy, forcing her milk yield to swell even higher.

BST is already used in the United States and world trade laws make it likely that we will be unable to prevent its use here, even if the Blair government and the European Council of Ministers object.

In these conditions it is hardly surprising Daisy is dirty. Perhaps her most common malady is mastitis, bacterial infection of the udder. Today the focus of infection is on mycobacterium paratuberculosis - the bug linked with Crohn's disease. But

Daisy's milk may also contain salmonella, listeria and E. coli - the big-name food poisoning bugs whose outbreaks have reached record levels long after Edwina Currie unintentionally fell face first into the food scandal. The food scandals have been mostly about gut-wrenching bacteria. Some, like E. coli 0157, are directly linked with cattle production and are known killers even if a tiny dose, as few as just 10 organisms, is ingested. But there is another side to this bacteria battle. Antibiotics are routinely used on our dairy herds - both to promote growth and to treat infections like mastitis.

The constant use of antibiotics creates a triple danger. First, it creates a super-strain of dangerous bacteria that have developed resistance to our drugs. They are a real threat in their own right, and food poisoning bugs that infect cattle, like types of salmonella typhimurium, are immune to virtually every antibiotic in our drug arsenal. Second, bacteria that infect farm animals are deeply promiscuous, able to pass on their antibiotic immunity to a whole host of other, dangerous organisms. And, if the situation were not bad

enough, we have the whole related problem of antibiotic residues in our milk. Why is the dairy cow forced to submit to such conditions - fed its own brains and forced often to stand in its own excrement? It's that she is simply the grubbiest engine of modern agriculture.

If you think I am exaggerating, let me quote the latest figures obscurely published by the Ministry of Agriculture last week.

This study is so buried in official statistics that it brazenly calls itself: "Summary of 1998 Dung Survey". It reveals that the average cattle hide inspected carries 1.07 kilos of dung - that's nearly 2.5 lbs in old coinage.

Now, some of the healthiest people on earth usually avoid milk, namely the Chinese, Japanese and other Pacific Rim people whose healthy longevity is well known. Other cultures that do use milk - such as many groups in the Indian sub-continent and Africa - make sure they disarm it. When milk is fermented into yoghurt and cheese two very important things happen. First, the fermentation bacteria transform lactose (the milk sugar to which many are intolerant) into lactic acid. Second, the harmless

fermentation bacteria actually produce their own biocides that kill off the salmonellas and other nasties that threaten us.

You think after centuries that these basic food hygiene steps would be pretty obvious. And yet, the Americans were still stupid enough in the 1950s and 1960s to parachute dried milk into famine areas whose peoples had no longer any ability to digest lactose milk sugars.

The result was that extreme hunger was combined with dysentery - boosting, not diminishing, the death toll.

But here in the West, we are too arrogant to kill off milk's dangers. Instead we have decided milk can be safely drunk if it is pasteurised. This means heating the milk to a level which wipe out most bugs, but in reality, cannot kill them all. Yes, when Louis Pasteur thought up the idea, it might have been a blessing. But these days pasteurisation may simply lull us into a false security - as have so many other scientific quick-fixes in recent decades.

Yesterday's announcement about cow milks' potential dangers is, once you know the whole story, hardly surprising.

RIGHT OF REPLY

DR PETER HAWKER



The joint deputy chairman of the BMA's Consultants' Committee answers criticisms of consultants' pay

THE MERIT award system for medical consultants has always caused controversy, even amongst consultants themselves.

The scheme, which was introduced by the Labour government in 1948, was and is intended to reward work of high merit and "to provide for a significant minority of consultants the opportunity to provide income comparable with the highest which could be earned in other professions". In short, to encourage those who might otherwise have left the National Health Service to achieve higher earnings, to stay in the service.

Today the average hard-working consultant can earn between £44,700 and £54,800 per year, a fraction of the earnings of senior members of many other professions.

A significant minority of consultants, who perform exceptionally high quality of work locally, or whose work is of major national or international significance, are beacons of excellence and enhance the reputation of the profession in British medicine. This excellence should be rewarded by a fair system of distinction payments. The *Independent* itself, (11 August) suggests that there should be larger incentives for those who are truly outstanding.

The BMA agrees that such a scheme must be fair and open, and that any imbalances or inequalities must be corrected. There must be further mechanisms for withdrawing awards when performance has fallen below acceptable standards.

However, the case for an open and fair merit award system remains as strong today as it was 50 years ago, and we will support the Government in its plans to reaffirm and reform the system to bring this about.

Why one day is like any other



WEDNESDAY BOOK

THE CALENDAR

BY DAVID EWING DUNCAN. FOURTH ESTATE. £12.99

adopted, to Pope Gregory's adjustment of it in 1582.

The history of science in the Middle Ages would have been very different if the bishops of Nicaea had decided simply to name a fixed date for Easter," he writes. "Instead, in the wake of Nicaea, Christians developed a complex equation to determine the proper day, forcing time-reckoners to return to something Caesar had dispensed with centuries earlier: a dependence on the moon."

The problem was that the date of the Crucifixion - the most important Christian feast - was known only by reference to the Jewish lunar calendar: the first Sunday after the first full

moon after the spring equinox. The trouble here is that 12 lunar months add up to just over 354 days - 11 short of a solar year. Fiddling with this discrepancy played an important part in the history of medieval Christianity.

Duncan attributes the Julian (solar) calendar to Caesar's love for Cleopatra, who apparently told him about the secret of leap years (which the Egyptians had known for centuries) during a dull moment in their affair. So Julius Caesar recalibrated the Roman calendar, and gave us an extra day every fourth February.

Compared with the inexact measurements of everything else in the Middle Ages, the correctness of the



The date of the Crucifixion was the problem for the Calendar

calendar - so important to the Christian Church as an indication of the mind of God - was astounding. Caesar's figure of 365.25 days was less than .01 of a day out. What other measurement of the time was correct to four significant figures? And when a slippage was noticed in the predictions of the equinoxes and the full moons on which Easter was based, Pope Gregory made his amendment specifying that century years would not be leap, except for every fourth one. So 1800 and 2000 are leap years according to the new system, but 1700, 1800 and 1900 were not. That adjustment gave a year so accurate that it will not have slipped out by a whole day until the year 4000.

But to come back to the hippo's problem: was yesterday really Tuesday? The seven-day week was bequeathed by the Babylonians, who assigned the days to planet-gods. If they had known that there were nine planets in the Solar System, we'd now have a nine-day week. One of the

many fascinating facts I learnt from this book was why Sunday follows Saturday.

"The order of the day names themselves comes from ancient Mesopotamian astrologers" attaching a planet-god to preside over each hour of the day arranged according to their correct cosmological order. For instance, Saturn controlled the first hour of Saturday's day (Saturday), followed in its second hour by Jupiter, then by Mars, the Sun, Venus, Mercury and the moon. In the eighth hour the cycle started again with Saturn and the progression repeated until the 24th hour of the day, which happened to fall to Mars. Because the next hour in the cycle - the first hour of the new day - belonged to the sun god, the day after Saturday was called Sunday.

So it might as well be Tuesday after all. Forget Stephen Hawking: The calendar is a brief history of time that we can all understand and enjoy.

WILLIAM HARTSTON

For a
cheeky
bière.

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WEDNESDAY POEM

MUD
BY PENELOPE SHUTTLE

Somewhere they are still drowning newborn daughters, somewhere in teashops beautiful as she somersaults into sleep, into dreams of dextrous dissent, of basic masquerade, where a revolutionary army rises from the mud, leaping like frogs.

Our poems until Friday come from *Ambit 153*. The magazine costs £6 for a single copy or £22 for an annual subscription, from 17. Priory Gardens, London N6 5QY

WILLIAM HARTSTON

The Right Rev Howell Witt

HOWELL WITT, Bishop of North West Australia from 1965 to 1981, was not one for standing on ceremony.

Moving from a dockworker's home in Newport, South Wales, to Bishoprics in Australia was not a journey he had ever imagined in his youth. It was always his dearest wish to enter the priesthood, and he brought to the role an astonishing enthusiasm for life, a clownish talent and a classless ability to mix with everyone, young and old, which leavened a central, simple religious faith.

He was born in 1920 into a Methodist family and, after gaining an arts degree at Leeds University, he moved to Mirfield College in Yorkshire to prepare for holy orders. He was ordained in 1944 and went to his first curacy in Usk, in Monmouthshire. Here he gained an insight into working beyond normal parish bounds which stayed with him for the rest of his ministry.

His vicar spotted his talent for playing the fool and instructed him to put on a play at the local Borsal and at the vicarage fete. Witt's character of Dickie Bach Dwyi is still fondly remembered in Usk. Young people adored his playfulness, including those who were once allowed to tie him up on a Saturday morning in the vicarage and then forgot him for several hours whilst he tried to struggle free. On that occasion he was not entirely amused.

From Usk he moved to Camberwell in London, but in 1948, when the Bishop of Willochra, South Australia, was in Britain recruiting cler-

gy, Howell's old vicar suggested him. Precise information about the proposed job, except that it was at the Woomera Rocket Range, was difficult to come by and one of the many items Willochra neglected to mention was that Howell would have to join the Australian army on arrival. Under protest, Howell signed up, but wreaked revenge when Willochra,

A barber's shop served as a church; a bottle of wine, a cheese dish and a beer mug formed the essentials of the Eucharist

who visited much of his diocese on horseback, wandered into Woomera and was picked up by an army captain who came to Witt for confirmation of the Bishop's identity. Howell said that he had never met the man.

Woomera was a time of improvisation. A barber's shop served as a church and church vessels were cobbled from anything to hand - a bottle of wine, a cheese dish and a beer mug forming the essentials of the Eucharist. This scenario was often repeated "outback". Even the

Duke of Edinburgh visiting the North West Diocese found that the service was being held in a local police court.

The opening of Woomera fete saw the first appearance of a new Australian identity, "the Dowager Duchess of Dingo Creek", with Witt decked out in drag. This appearance was repeated five years later at St Peter's College in Adelaide, to the great delight of the boys. This link with St Peter's College was a saving grace for Howell as by this time he had moved to a formal Adelaide parish and found it difficult after the improvisation and outgoing sociability of the bush.

In 1957 Howell volunteered to be Priest-in-Charge of Elizabeth, a new town outside Adelaide set in a treeless, dusty plain with "one telephone box and no cemetery". It was full of unhappy immigrant families from Britain. Once again he was operating in a place which demanded improvisation and an outgoing social role. Schools and sheds hosted Sunday Schools and church services. When the first of two churches was built it doubled as a dance hall, with dances being passed off as church services by Witt in order to circumvent the law. This work produced two ulcers, but it also produced grateful congregations who benefited from their priest's leadership.

In 1965 he was elected Bishop of North West Australia, a diocese quarter the size of Australia and the largest in the Anglican Communion. He accepted with reservations and an unusual humility. However, he took to it with gusto, making the central part of his work



Witt, left, talking to Alan Whicker for his programme *Whicker's World - Down Under*, 1976

the pastoral support of his clergy. He often used the "milk run" plane up the coast for his work, and passengers were started one fine day to see the Bishop in full episcopal regalia, having changed in the loo, processing up the plane, ready to bless the fishing fleet in Broome. "One or two thought their last moment had come," he said when relating the tale.

The Bishop's Palace was a boarding house in Geraldton, far north of

Perth, but the Bishop was rarely at home. Doreen, his wife, held the fort while the Bishop visited outback sheep stations whose residents rarely saw a "sky pilot". He tried his hand at sheep-dipping, goat-hunting and when visiting the seaboard handled the bait for the lobster and crayfish catchers. For seven months of the year he travelled but found time to write a column for one of Rupert Murdoch's newspapers, was filmed for the Australian Broadcasting

Company and in 1980 published an autobiography entitled *Bush Bishop* - a fulfilling life.

In 1984 he was offered and accepted a move to the more conventional Diocese of Bathurst in New South Wales, delighted to find a "three-loo modern house" and the comforts of a medium-sized town.

In 1985 Howell was badly hurt in a car crash but he soldiered on to 1988, when he retired to Perth.

Christine Davies

Howell Arthur John Witt, priest born Newport, Monmouthshire 12 July 1920; ordained 1945; Chaplain, Woomera, South Australia 1949-54; Rector, St Mary Magdalene's, Adelaide 1954-57; Missioner of St Peter's College Mission 1954-65; Priest in charge, Elizabeth 1957-65; Bishop of North West Australia 1965-81; married 1949 Doreen Edwards (died 1983; three sons, two daughters); died Perth, Western Australia 14 July 1998.

O. Z. Whitehead



Hulton Getty

Whitehead as Al in *The Grapes of Wrath*, 1940

O. Z. WHITEHEAD was one of the last surviving members of John Ford's "stock company" of character actors. Along with John Carradine, Donald Meek, Ward Bond, Ben Johnson, Harry Carey Jr et al, Whitehead was one of the many actors regularly employed by Ford to breathe life into even the smallest roles in his films. His best-known part was that of Al in Ford's 1940 adaptation of John Steinbeck's novel *The Grapes of Wrath*.

Born in Manhattan in 1911, Whitehead was given the splendidly improbable names of Oothout Zabriskie, which satisfactorily explains his preference for being called "Zebby" throughout his life. His father, a wealthy banker with Even Stillman & Co, took his son regularly to the cinema and, by the age of 10, Whitehead had determined to become an actor.

On leaving St Mark's School, he entered Harvard University, where he became friends with Dick Hepburn, brother of Katharine, and cheerfully neglected his English studies in favour of amateur dramatics. After three years, he left college without graduating, and, despite his mother's disapproval, made his theatrical debut in *The Lake* in 1933.

Two years later, Whitehead played a bit part in his first film, *The Scoundrel*, starring Noel Coward and directed by Ben Hecht and Charles MacArthur. His theatre work in the Thirties included the Lunts' production of *The Seagull* and *Summer* opposite the silent-screen actress Lois Wilson.

When John Ford was casting *The Grapes of Wrath*, Whitehead - whom he had met at the Hepburns in 1936 - was summoned to Hollywood, where, at the director's insistence, he was given the small but important part of Al over the better-known actors Glenn Ford and Mickey Rooney. He followed this with a

long run in Chicago in *Life with Father*, in which he played opposite his lifelong friend Lillian Gish.

His next film was to be *Henry Hathaway's Ten Gentlemen from West Point* (1942), but on the United States' entering the Second World War, Whitehead joined up, despite the fact that he had previously

been a member of an anti-war group. Curvature of the spine ruled him out of active service, but he finished the war in the Pacific with the rank of sergeant.

On his return to Hollywood, he appeared in *Fred Zinnemann's My Brother Talks to Horses* (1946), but was forced to turn down a part in

Ford's *My Darling Clementine* due to overlapping schedules. He kept active throughout the Forties with supporting roles in *The Romance of Rosy Ridge* (1947), *Vincente Minnelli's The Pirate* (1948), *Road House* (1948), *Family Honeymoon* (1948), and *Howard Hawks's A Song is Born* (also 1948), a musical remake of the director's *Ball of Fury* (1941).

In 1950, Whitehead, increasingly disillusioned with post-war Hollywood, became a member of the Bahai faith, a Persian-founded sect of Utopian outlook. After appearing in *Beware, My Lovely* (1952) with Robert Ryan and Ida Lupino, and making an unfortunate investment in a film called *Miss Body Beautiful* (which he also appeared in 1953), he returned to New York where he divided his time between the stage (touring with Lillian and Dorothy Gish in *The Chalk Garden*), live television, and promoting Bahaiism.

It was Ford who ensured Whitehead's return to Hollywood when, in 1958, he persuaded him to play the part of the patrician Norman Case Jr in *The Lost Horrah*, the part which equates most readily to Whitehead's own background. He then played an army medic in Ford's *The Horse Soldiers* (1959), opposite John Wayne and William Holden; Lieutenant Chase in Ford's *Two Rode Together* (1961); and, in his last film for Ford, *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* (1962), a country-dwelling Herbert Carruthers. In one scene, John Wayne's Tom Doniphon dismisses Carruthers

from the saloon on the grounds that he is too young to vote. At the time, Whitehead was 51 years old but still so youthful-looking that neither he nor Ford saw anything unusual in his playing the part.

Asked about Ford's notoriously irascible manner, Whitehead admitted to liking him, while at the same time adding that he could be "terribly difficult". Certainly, the refined Whitehead was uncomfortable with the Ford-Wayne-Bond drinking and gambling clique, and preferred to recall the director's personal generosity when Whitehead's scenes on *The Horse Soldiers* were finished. Perhaps knowing something of Whitehead's financial predicament, Ford announced to one and all, "Zebby is through here, but he isn't through *Ford*wise", and kept him on the payroll for a forthcoming benefit performance.

Whitehead's other films from this period include *Rally 'Round The Flag, Boys!* with Paul Newman (1958), *Charroose Caboose* (1960), and for Disney, *Summer Magic* (1963) with Hayley Mills.

That same year, Whitehead moved to Ireland, settling in Dublin where he continued to advance Bahaiism as well as act in various films and plays, the latter including Samuel Beckett's *Happy Days*. In 1966, he won the Best Supporting Actor award at the Dublin Theatre Festival for his performance as the night porter in Eugene O'Neill's *Hughie*, a part he was to return to at the Peacock in 1969.

He also founded the Whitehead Award For Drama in 1966 to encourage new writing in the field of one-act dramas; and, the following year, had a part in Joseph Strick's film version of James Joyce's *Ulysses*. His television appearances included *Passing Through, Caught in a Free State* (as the wartime US ambassador to Ireland), and two episodes of the long-running RTE soap *Glenroe*. His later films included *Philadelphia, Here I Come* (1975), and the RTE-financed adaptation of *Diary of a Madman* (1990).

A popular Dublin character, often to be seen passing St Stephen's Green on his way to lunch at the University and Kildare Street Club, Whitehead also wrote three books, including a memoir of Lillian Gish. His final film was *Reaper*, a short directed by Stephen Bradley in 1994. Whitehead played an old man living alone in a remote country house who, one stormy night, is visited by Death. Whitehead escorts the Grim One upstairs to a room in which a projector is continuously running his scenes from *The Grapes of Wrath*. Suitably impressed by this evidence of immortality, Death departs, leaving the old man laughing. For Whitehead, who, even in late years, always referred to his mentor as "Mr Ford", it provided a fond farewell.

John Exshaw

Oothout Zabriskie Whitehead, actor and writer: born New York 18 March 1911; died Dublin 29 July 1998.

Zeki Kuneralp

ON MANY occasions over the last 20 years, unexpected visitors would turn up in a quiet street in an Istanbul suburb beside the Sea of Marmara: one day a former US Secretary of State, on another perhaps a professor of late Roman history from Princeton, on others ambassadors from any of half a dozen countries. Such were the visitors throughout the two decades of the retirement of Zeki Kuneralp, one of the most remarkable diplomats Turkey has produced this century.

They came to visit a man in a wheelchair, bent almost double by progressive multiple sclerosis and effectively imprisoned in his book-lined study, but with a serenity and detachment achieved by very few. It came at the end of a life in which professional brilliance and cruel personal tragedy were mixed in almost equal proportions. Somehow Kuneralp transcended them both effort-

lessly: "I would come to Istanbul just to see Zeki. He is one of the most inspiring people I know," a leading American historian once said.

Kuneralp was born in Istanbul in 1914. His father was Ali Kemal, a leading late Ottoman liberal journalist and politician. On his mother's side, he was the grandson of one of the leading pasbas of the Empire. During the British occupation of Istanbul (1919-22), his father leaned politically against the nationalists in Ankara and was kidnapped and murdered in 1922. His mother took the family into exile in Switzerland and he received a Swiss education, going all the way up to a law doctorate from the University of Berne in 1938.

For the rest of his life, Kuneralp remained strong and affectionate. He would chuckle at the discomfort of Swiss businessmen who found themselves sitting next to a foreigner able to un-

derstand Swiss German, but he remained in touch with his Berne schoolfriends and the land of his childhood till the end.

Despite his father's controversial reputation in modern Turkish history, the Turkish Foreign Ministry accepted Kuneralp into its ranks in 1938 with the express approval of President İsmet, Ataturk's successor. He served in Bucharest, Prague, Paris, and with Nato.

He belonged to a generation which was schooled to believe that friendship between Greece and Turkey was the cornerstone of international order in the eastern Mediterranean. By the time he came to London for his first spell there as ambassador in 1964, Cyprus was dominating Turkey's international agenda and absorbed most of his energies as a diplomat. By now he believed firmly that the future for Turkey must lie in integration into the nascent European

Union, a view which he learned from Fatin Rüdül, a casualty of the 1960 coup in Turkey but one of the Turkish foreign ministers whom Kuneralp most admired. During his two ambassadorships in London (1964-66 and 1969-72) Kuneralp pursued his interests in history and the arts, as well as his professional career. Arnold Toynbee, whose vision of the history of world civilisations appealed to Kuneralp, became a friend.

He had by then already served as Secretary-General, i.e. permanent under-secretary, of the Foreign Ministry and his mobility was already affected by the beginning of his multiple sclerosis. So he was content that his final posting be to Spain, a country whose culture and arts appealed to him, as too perhaps did its conservatism. In his penultimate year there tragedy struck his family again.

During the 1970s Armenian gun-

men murdered Turkish diplomats and their families in cities across the world. Kuneralp, now elderly and walking on crutches, might have seemed an unlikely victim. But one morning his wife, Necla, and his brother-in-law, also on sticks, were murdered outside their home by gunmen who were never caught. The marriage had been an extremely happy one, but Kuneralp bore his loss with dignity and fortitude. He made only one public comment and it was characteristically restrained. When the *Economist* described the murder as "an act of vengeance against a cruel hereditary enemy", Kuneralp wrote a reader's letter to the magazine gently asking how events said to have taken place before her birth could possibly justify the murder of his wife.

A year later Kuneralp left Spain and went into retirement. He had by now lost all his mobility and his phys-

ical condition was sometimes distressing for visitors. He himself paid no attention to it, writing an autobiography which was published in both Turkish and English, *Just a Diplomat* (1981, and 1992 in English), and then a volume on his father, *Ali Kemal (1869-1922): a portrait for the benefit of his English-speaking progeny* (1993), while professing that he had renounced the world and current affairs. His charm, intellectual distinction, and affection for his friends remained as strong as ever. Perhaps his spell over them came from the fact that, unlike some in his profession, he never said anything that he did not fully believe and had not carefully thought through.

He is survived by two sons, whose careers each reflect Zeki Kuneralp's main interests, one being a diplomat and the other a publisher of history books.

David Bareford

Zeki Kuneralp, diplomat: born Istanbul 5 October 1914; Turkish ambassador to Berne 1960; Turkish ambassador to London 1964-66, 1969-72; Secretary-General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ankara 1966-69; Turkish ambassador to Spain 1972-79; married 1943 Necla Özülfeci (died 1978; two sons); died Istanbul 26 July 1998.



Zeki Kuneralp, diplomat: born Istanbul 5 October 1914; Turkish ambassador to Berne 1960; Turkish ambassador to London 1964-66, 1969-72; Secretary-General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ankara 1966-69; Turkish ambassador to Spain 1972-79; married 1943 Necla Özülfeci (died 1978; two sons); died Istanbul 26 July 1998.



Bob Wills and the Texas Playboys in the late 1940s. Shamblin is the second from the right, seated with guitar

Redfern

Eldon Shamblin

MANY MUSICIANS who helped to make popular music great are forgotten names today, if indeed they were ever known outside of a particular band's followers. However, their contribution is not diminished by that. Eldon Shamblin was not a front man but, 60 years ago, his guitar playing and arrangements helped to establish Bob Wills and his Texas Playboys as a leading country music band, and then, in the 1970s, he played with the top country music act of the day, Merle Haggard and the Strangers.

The corn was as high as an elephant's eye when Eldon Shamblin was born in Oklahoma in 1916, but he was determined not to work as a labourer and practised the guitar from an early age. His first jobs were in the bars on the lower side of Oklahoma City in 1933. He earned little money and even when he was given a regular radio show, the pay was only two meals a day.

In 1935 he joined Dave Edwards's Alabama Boys and they played what is now known as "western swing", a lively hybrid of country music and jazz. Moving to a radio station in Tulsa, he was spotted by Bob Wills and invited to join his band. Shamblin said, "I was the first one out of the Alabama Boys to join the Texas Playboys but they all gradually joined."

Bob Wills became known as the King of Western Swing and he surrounded himself with excellent musicians. Wills was quick to showcase Shamblin's talent on the newly invented electric guitar, and he became the first person to own a Fender Stratocaster, having been given a trial model by Leo Fender himself.

His duet with the steel guitarist Leon McAuliffe, "Twin Guitar Special" (1941), is a seminal record, and other noted guitarists such as Charlie Christian and Les Paul were keen to see him play. Shamblin also arranged Wills's best-known recordings including "San Antonio Rose" and "Faded Love". Being in the band was a rollercoaster ride as Wills was married and divorced five times between 1935 and 1942, and the repertoire would switch from sad to happy songs according to his mood.

The band's lead singer, Tommy Duncan, enlisted for military service and chastised the others for not doing so. Wills's health prevented him signing up but Shamblin enlisted in 1942 and became a captain. He rejoined Bob Wills in 1947, but he contented himself by playing rhythm and occasional lead guitar. Years later, *Rolling Stone* magazine described him as "the world's greatest

rhythm guitar player". Shamblin also became the group's manager and was with them until 1954 when he joined Hoyt Axton's western swing band. He did, however, return to Wills's band for some months in 1956.

Tiring of the road, Eldon Shamblin left Wills for the final time in 1957 and he returned to Tulsa, playing locally and working as a piano tuner and electric organ repairer. He returned to top-level country music in 1970 when Merle Haggard dedicated an album to Bob Wills, *A Tribute to the Best Damn Fiddle Player in the World*, on which he was accompanied by the Texas Playboys. The musicians recorded 27 songs in two days but Wills, recovering from a stroke, was too ill to contribute himself.

Haggard, who always loved the western sound, invited Shamblin to become a member of his band, the Strangers, in 1975 and he toured and recorded with the band until 1981, when at the age of 65, he decided to retire. He is featured on the Merle Haggard album *Rainbow Stew - Live at Anaheim Stadium* (1981) and he would rejoin Haggard whenever he played in Tulsa.

Merle Haggard said in his autobiography, *Sing Me Back Home* (1981), "Eldon's guitar work is so great that he can just stop everybody in their tracks."

Willie Nelson's own single-note, flat-pick guitar style also owes something to Eldon Shamblin.

In 1983, Shamblin was back playing with his former comrades in *Playboys II*. Over the years he was involved in various one-off projects and he has recorded with another key western swing musician, Johnnie Lee Wills, as well as the jazz musicians Herb Ellis and Shelly Manne. In 1977 he made the jazz album *SWonderful* with Joe Venuti, Curly Chalker and Jethro Burns, and he released a solo album, *Guitar Genius*, in 1980. The title amuses him, as he was a modest man who made jokes about the music industry.

In 1983 he joined *Asleep at the Wheel* for their Grammy-winning tribute to Bob Wills for which he was joined by Chet Atkins and Vince Gill on the track "Red Wing". In 1996, he released a solo album for his 80th birthday, *There'll Be Some Changes Made*. He commented: "There's a fine bunch of pickers on there. I guess they don't have anything better to do."

Spencer Leigh

Eldon Shamblin, guitarist: born Weatherford, Oklahoma 24 April 1916; married (two daughters); died Tulsa, Oklahoma 5 August 1998.

BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS

DEATHS

CHILD WILLIAMS: George Francis, Earl of Jersey, died peacefully on Sunday 8 August 1998 at the Jersey General Hospital. Beloved husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather. The funeral service will take place at the Grange Parish Church on Monday 17 August 1998 at 2.30pm, followed by private cremation. Family flowers only please. Donations if desired may be sent to Jersey SPCA, 100 The Quay, Jersey, JE1 2JG, or to the Jersey Cottages, Rue de la Goutte, St Ouen, Jersey, or the British Heart Foundation (Jersey Appeal), c/o Mrs V. Scarrow, Le Hurel, La Rue du Tas de Geon, Trinity JE3 5AN. Enquiries to Pitcher & Le Quebec Ltd, Funeral Directors, telephone 01534 33330.

ANNOUNCEMENTS for Gazette BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS (Births, Deaths, Marriages, Deaths, Memorial services, Weddings, Anniversaries, In memoriam) are charged at 15.50 a line (VAT extra). OTHER Gazette announcements (notices, functions, forthcoming marriages, Marriages, which must be submitted in writing, are charged at 10 a line. VAT extra).

CHANGING OF THE GUARD
The King's Troop Royal Horse Artillery mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am.

BIRTHDAYS

Mr Roger Abel, chairman Conoco UK, 55; Miss Elizabeth Appleby QC, 56; Mr Michael Brunson, television reporter and newscaster, 58; Mr Kenneth Collins, MBE, 59; Mr Gordon Duggan, High Commissioner to Singapore, 61; Admiral Sir Kenneth Eaton, former Controller of the Navy, 64; Mr George Hamilton, actor, 59; General Sir Patrick Howard-Dobson, former President, Royal British Legion, 77; Sir Anthony Jolliffe, former Lord Mayor of London, 60; Professor David King, Master of Downing College, Cambridge, 59; Mr Mark Knopfler, singer and rock guitarist, 49; Mr Norris McWhirter, a founder of the *Guinness Book of Records*, 78; Sir Pete Sampras, tennis player, 27; Mr Peter West, sports commentator, 76; Mr Tony Wright MP, 44; Professor Graham Zellick, Principal, Queen Mary and Westfield College, London, 50.

ANNIVERSARIES

Births: Martin Gerbert (von Hornau), prince-abbot and music historian, 1720; Rowland Hill, preacher, 1744; Thomas Bewick, wood engraver, artist and naturalist, 1753; George IV, King, 1762; Robert Southey, poet.

Deaths: Philip VI, King of France, 1350; Pope Sixtus IV, 1484; Giovanni Gabrieli, composer, 1612; Philippe de Champaigne, painter, 1674; Pope Innocent XI, 1689; Nahum Tate, playwright, 1715; Robert Stewart, second Marquess of Londonderry and Viscount Castlereagh, statesman, committed suicide 1822; William Blake, poet and painter, 1827; George Stephenson, locomotive engineer, 1848; William Daniel Conybeare, geologist, 1857; Sir William Jackson Hooker, botanist, 1865; James Drummond, historical painter, 1877; Dr George Curries, philologist, 1885; James Russell Lowell, poet, critic and diplomat, 1891; Nils Adolf Erik, Baron Norden-

skjold, geologist and explorer, 1901; John Philip Holland, designer of the submarine, 1914; Arthur Griffith, Irish nationalist and president of Sinn Fein, 1922; Leos Janácek, composer, 1928; Thomas Mann, novelist, 1955; Ian Lancaster Fleming, novelist, creator of "James Bond", 1964; Thomas Edward Drifberg, first Baron Bradwell, journalist, 1978; Henry Fonda, actor, 1982.

On this day: the Crusaders were victorious at the Battle of Ascalon, 1099; Ottoman invaders of Hungary were routed at the Battle of Mohacs, 1526; the Russian-Austrian army overpowered the Prussians at the Battle of Kunersdorf, 1759; the Duke of Wellington's troops entered Madrid, 1812; in a contest, the schooner *America* beat the British yacht *Aurora*, thus giving rise later to the "America's Cup", 1851; the US and Spain concluded an armistice over Cuba and other possessions, 1898; Britain declared war on Austria-Hungary, 1914; during World War II, the "pipeline under the ocean" (*Pluto*) began operating beneath the English Channel, 1944; *Echo I*, the first communications satellite, 100 feet in diameter, was launched, 1960.

Today is the Feast Day of St Euplius, St Jambert, St Murtagh or Muredach, and St Porcarius and his Companions.

RECORDERS

The following have been appointed Recorders:

Western Circuit: Thomas Gareth Cowling, Neil Murray Ford QC, Geoff Michael Mercer, Frank Simon Privett, Elizabeth Anna Ralph, David John Morgan Andrew QC, New David John Godfrey James Evans, Gary Robert Hickensdon, Geoffrey William Little, John Edward Morris QC, David John Phillips QC, Judge David Wyo Keen, Gwilym Wyn Rees, Robin Geoffrey Spencer, Christopher Ian Vesper, Stephen Garside, Michael John Hounslow, Andrew Alan Bell QC, William James Lynott Eddie QC, Judge Robert Henry Lynn Blissett, Judge David William Geddes, Lawrence Pilkington QC, Simon Robert Crookenden QC, Nigel Anthony Lamert Davis QC, Nicola Veller QC, David Pinner, Ian Hammett QC, Peter Pinner QC, W. C. Judge Stephen Martin Popat, Michael Geoffrey James Ockelford, Sophie Penrose Gough, Michael Michael Kenneth Harrington, Alan Mark Johnson Christopher Anthony Nott, Andrew Lewis QC, Michael Charles James Mardon QC, Andrew Hugh Murray QC, Elizabeth Anne Evelyn Harrison Pratley QC, Nigel Michael Pinner QC, Michael Peter Pinner QC, Justice Peter Plummer, Sandra Dhirajlal Popat, Jeremy Ross Leon Pusztai QC, Joannan Ewan Rayner QC, Mark Alan Sainsbury QC, Elizabeth Anne Sainsbury QC, Peter John Camille Turner, John Francis Ut QC, Suzanne Elizabeth Wadham.

LECTURES

National Gallery: Mari Griffith, "Venice (II): Bellini, The Doge Leonardo Loredan", 1pm; Victoria and Albert Museum: Michael Keen, "Jewish Art (I)", 2pm; Tate Gallery: Clement Page, "The Anxious Object of Dada and Surrealism", 1pm; British Museum: Carolyn Perry, "Who Were the Mamluks?", 11.30am.

HISTORICAL NOTES

AVIVA HALAMISH

The struggle for a Jewish state

THE MAIN object of the Zionist movement following the Second World War was the founding of a Jewish state in Palestine. Holocaust survivors were assigned a key role in the struggle for achieving that goal. They created a link - in world public opinion - between a solution for the problem of the Jewish Displaced Persons (DPs) in Europe and the establishment of a sovereign, independent Jewish state in Palestine. The idea was to keep the plight of the DPs, still languishing in Europe so many months after the war, alive in the headlines and to drive home the fact that they were yearning to settle in Palestine.

This was done by an organised operation of illegal immigration. In the three years between the end of the Second World War and the founding of the state of Israel, 64 illegal immigration ships made their way from European ports eastward, carrying some 70,000 Jews. Most of the ships were intercepted by vessels of the Royal Navy and their passengers temporarily imprisoned in detention camps.

Historians have puzzled over the question of whether the Zionist policy behind illegal immigration was in keeping with the interests of the survivors of the Holocaust, or whether it had more to do with the Zionist struggle in general, and whether the illegal immigration operation, in particular, actually conflicted with the desire of its human objects.

Initially, the Holocaust survivors were portrayed as ardent Zionists desiring to emigrate to Palestine and as passive objects, activated by emissaries from Palestine. This wave of writings was used as a semi-official historiography, intended to answer the needs of the Israeli society in transition from voluntary society to independent state.

Years later, research introduced the Holocaust survivors as subjects making their own calculated decisions. Palestine was the preferred emigration destination, for various reasons. Some had always been Zionists keen to emigrate to Palestine. Others were post-catastrophe Zionists: the Holocaust had converted them to Zionism. There were those who wanted to emigrate to Palestine because if they were still capable of thinking in terms of "home", then Eretz-Israel - or Palestine - was it.

This wave of research offered a synthetic



Illegal immigrant, Haifa, 1947

version of the role played by Holocaust survivors in the struggle for a Jewish state. Further, more recent studies accuse Zionist leadership of manipulation of Holocaust survivors in the struggle for a Jewish state.

In looking for a reply to the question regarding the attitudes of the Holocaust survivors themselves, bear in mind that they embarked on the ships of the illegal fleet on a completely voluntary basis. And had it not been for the Zionists and the Jewish community in Palestine who were so eager to found a Jewish state, what would have happened then to the many thousands of Jewish DPs?

Illegal immigration into Palestine of Holocaust survivors was a unique method chosen by the Jewish national liberation movement - Zionism - in its struggle for independence. Not personal or blind terror, nor acts of violence involving physical attacks on the enemy and casualties on the part of the perpetrators, but a calculated mix of political and diplomatic activity and a struggle which took advantage of the weakness of the strong and the power of the weak. This struggle also bears a universal message, which traverses the boundaries of time and place, of the spirit of man, of his willingness to struggle and of his ability to overcome hardship, when faced with an objective in which he believes and is convinced that he is able to achieve.

Aviva Halamish is the author of *The Exodus Affair - Holocaust survivors and the struggle for Palestine* (Valentine Mitchell, £35/£18).

Not 'enterprise culture' but rank bureaucracy

THE INDEPENDENT ARCHIVE

12 AUGUST 1988

People do not run their own lives under Mrs Thatcher's 'revolution'.

It is a nanny state, overrun with regulations and tainted by jobs for the boys

poll tax I have been asked on what day of the month in what year I first occupied my house.

Once or twice a year I buy or sell a stock or share. I have dealt to my satisfaction with the same firm of stockbrokers off and on for over 50 years as my father before me. They have now, with apologies, sent me a client agreement letter of four closely printed columns. This they tell me I must sign. I must also fill in an application form on which I must state whether I am an owner or tenant of my house, who is my employer, what credit cards I hold, how many years I have banked with my bank, how long I lived at my present address, etc. What are the offers that I have received from unknown yuppies over the telephone to invest money in sugar futures?

Another couple of years of Tory big government and it will be seen that the "Thatcherite revolution", though there have been important changes in the last eight years, is not a revolution at all in the fundamental nature of post-war government: bureaucratic, centralising and emphasising the advantages of the top insiders, the monopolists and all those insulated from the chores and troubles of ordinary life.

Jo Grimond

From *'The Independent'*, Friday 12 August 1988

WORDS

WILLIAM HARTSTON
monica, n. (slang)

Unconventional English Suspects include: St Monica (the name deriving from the Latin *monita*, an adviser), or an Italian word, *monaco*, for monk,

or backslang for "eke-name", with the back-form "emanake" becoming, by apesia, *maneke*, then *monike*. A derivation from monach is another idea. Partridge himself puts his money on *monoger* as an abbreviation of monogram, though *monoger* appeared only in 1928, compared with *monike* in 1851.

You ask the questions

(Such as, PR supremo Max Clifford, how would you get Tony Blair out of a tight corner with a Soho prostitute?)

Public relations consultant Max Clifford, 55, was born in Surrey. A former journalist, he has gained notoriety as master of the kiss 'n' tell exposé, notching up an impressive array of victims. Perhaps most famous was David Mellor who, Antonia de Sancho claimed, made love to her wearing his Chelsea strip. Clifford also represented Lady Buck, who told of her affair with the then defence chief Sir Peter Harding, and Mandy Allwood, who was expecting eight children after fertility treatment. He and his wife Elizabeth have a 26-year-old daughter, Louise.

If you had to marry either Antonia de Sancho or Lady Buck, who would it be? Sandra Weaver, Cheltenham

Probably Antonia because she had a sense of humour, and there was laughter always. Lady Buck had a tragic life and it showed. Antonia could laugh, Lady Buck couldn't.

Do you view these questions and this article with any sincerity or do you see it as just another vehicle for self-promotion? G Bolton

I didn't ask to do this interview. I never request interviews - it's not the way I work. I will say what I think and what I feel because that's the kind of person I am.

What would you advise Monica Lewinsky to do now? Would you like to represent her? Selina Dean, Chislehurst

I wouldn't represent her because I don't think what she's doing is right. My advice all along would be: nobody can force you to say you've had an affair with someone.

Had she come to me, I'd say: if you've seen to be the person who brings down possibly the most popular president in American history, it could affect your future happiness. It's going to make her incredibly unpopular whether she gets impeached or not.

What ambitions do you have left, and what was your first job in PR? Zeren Wilson, London

To carry on doing what I do for as long as possible and enjoy myself as much as I have done in the last 30 years. My first job was with EMI, helping to launch The Beatles and Tamla Motown in this country.

If it was discovered that Tony Blair visits prostitutes in Soho, how would you limit the damage? Tom Hamilton, Doncaster

I would get several of those prostitutes to come forward and say how Tony was a brother to them; he spent ages counselling them, telling them how to escape and how there was hope for them. If it was about sex then I'd try to get Cherie to justify it; encourage her to say they have a sexual problem, that her husband's a naturally physical man and she literally arranged it because she loves him.

What is the one thing in your life that has enabled you to become the success that you are? Aldous B, Kidderminster

Being in the right place at the right time. For example, I joined EMI in the early Sixties and was given an unknown band to launch called The Beatles.

I gather you're teetotal; surely the very nature of your job, and the speck of conscience you may have left, should dictate that you drink heavily and forget the anger that you cause! Duncan Brown

I hope and believe that the people I've made angry by my work and actions thoroughly deserve what they got. So I have absolutely no conscience about the people I've upset. I just wish there were more that I'd been able to show up.

Having handled publicity for such gruesome individuals as OJ Simpson and David Mellor (in a round-about way), is there anyone that you would refuse as a client and, if so, why? Alan

I turn down requests for rich and famous people every week of my life, because I don't like either them or what they stand for. I never pitch for a client. I make up my own mind about whether to accept someone.

Whose downfall to which you have contributed has given you the most pleasure? Hugh Hilton, London

Without doubt the last government. It gives me huge pleasure that I made a small contribution to their downfall by making sure that the word "sleaze" became associated with the Conservative government.



Amnesty International campaigns to free prisoners who have been put behind bars for engaging in non-violent opposition. What advice would you give those campaigning for the release of others still in prison in Nigeria and to end the human rights violations that put them there? Amanda Barnes and Monique Roffey, Amnesty International UK Press Office, London

When we do a lot of work for causes worldwide, it always helps if you can get a someone who is media attractive involved. I'm not saying that's how it should be but it works - you've got a far greater chance of getting the message across.

Why is it that whenever the Clinton/Lewinsky saga comes to a head (as it were), Saddam

Hussein seems to step in with a major distraction? Malcolm Marriot, Peterborough

It's an interesting thought that the Saddam Hussein situation is a ploy to distract us from the Clinton situation, but that's taking PR too far.

Can you recommend a decent restaurant in Raynes Park (where Max and his wife live, in south London)? Peter Johns, Southall

I can recommend two. For a cooked breakfast you can't beat Eastwell on Grand Drive; there's also Manns - a Chinese restaurant. I've taken Muhammad Ali and Frank Sinatra to both, and they loved them.

What's your favourite paper? Jean Pickering, Newcastle

I buy all of them everyday and enjoy different ones for different reasons.

Do you still stay in touch with Mandy eight-babies Allwood - what was the last thing you said to her? Chris Williams, Brighton

No, I don't. The last thing I said was "Good luck and I hope things work out for you both."

Ever thought about dying your eyebrows or pruning them? Diana Elliot, Luton

No, even though both my wife and daughter have made constant references to them over the years.

You must have a few enemies by now - who were you happiest to get the wrong side of? Tessie J Pertwee, Aldershot

You might be surprised that it's not David Mellor: he didn't matter very much. It's those in power that I'm happiest about getting on the wrong side of: the corrupt, the arrogant.

Do you always feel that you're in the right when you represent someone? Lesley Parsons, Tidbury

If I am not convinced, than I do not get involved.

Peter Mandelson and Alastair Campbell are powerful practitioners of the detestable art of political manipulation. Do you consider yourself suitably depraved to want to join them? Hamlet Solanki, Birmingham

I don't consider myself depraved nor do I have any wish to join them. But

without Peter Mandelson and Alastair Campbell, it's quite probable that the sleaziest government this country has possibly ever seen would still be in power.

How can you justify media manipulation and scandal as the basis of a virtuous career? Gayle Chalmers, Hampshire

Public relations is about getting the right message across. PR can also put the spotlight on corruption, get help to people when they need it and keep hospitals open - that's the power of the media.

By effectively ending David Mellor's political career, he launched himself as a media personality and we've been exposed to him far more as a result. If you feel bad about any dealings you've had, above all else do you feel guilty about this one?

Tim and Steve, Manchester

I take your point but I think from a Christian point of view I've done a good service in helping others feel better about themselves; no matter how ugly or repulsive you are, you can look at Mellor and think "Oh, I feel better after all."

Has anything you've been told in secret ever shocked you, or are you cynical about human behaviour? Wendy Tilston-Jones, Cheshire

The older I get, the less I am shocked. I'd hate to become cynical. Realistic is the word. Cynics never fall in love and there's a lot of love in my life.

NEXT WEEK: BRIAN SEWELL

Please send any questions you would like to put to the controversial art critic Brian Sewell, to: You Ask The Questions, Features, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL; by fax on 0171-293 2162; or e-mail them to questions@independent.co.uk to reach us by lunch time on Friday 14 August.

In the end, I was still her mother

When Claire Hart was murdered, her natural mother hadn't seen her for eight years. The case raises questions about the rights of natural parents, however unfit. By Karen David



Debra: "This was not how I wanted to see her"

You have a daughter whom you love very much. You realise you cannot look after her and reluctantly give her up to care. You go on loving her, pressing your social workers for information about her. You are rewarded with scraps of news and out-of-date photographs.

You don't know where she is living, or what kind of school she goes to. You don't know who is caring for her, or who her friends are. You don't know whether she is in trouble or doing well, happy or sad. Then one day you come home to find a note pushed through the door: "Call the police or social services," it says. "Your daughter is missing."

When 13-year-old Claire Hart was reported missing from her home in Eaton, Cheshire last month, hearts went out to the couple described in the press as her adoptive parents, Robin and Katherine Hart. When the girl's body was found six days later and a 19-year-old man, Craig Aaron Smith, was charged with her murder, many people mourned with the Harts.

But the Harts had never adopted Claire. Her real mother, Debra Pritchard, a student from Essex, had not been allowed to see her for eight years. Her story, following the conviction of Simon Jenkins for murdering his foster-daughter, Billie Jo, raises important questions about the rights of natural parents - however inadequate - whose children are taken into care. There is no suggestion that the Harts were other than loving foster parents. But Debra Pritchard and her legal advisers argue that her right to information about her children and her shared parental responsibility for them, was not acknowledged by the authorities.

Debra Pritchard has an appalling record as a mother. At 35 she has had six children by five different men. All the children have been in care; her eldest daughter Sarah is the only one whom she is able to see

regularly, after Sarah sought her out when she reached 18. Her own background provides a clue to her problems - she was taken into care at three, and spent her childhood in and out of children's homes. She was raped at 15 and became pregnant. At 16 she married a man who beat her; quickly became pregnant again and had a second daughter. She suffered a nervous breakdown at 18 and started taking tranquillisers. Her children were taken from her and she fled her native South Wales to an aunt in Essex. There her life followed the same disastrous pattern - relationships with violent men, pregnancies, children taken into care. "I wanted to give my children everything I didn't have," she says, "but I recognise that I couldn't cope and they were better off in care."

In the last year before Claire's death, Debra Pritchard had begun to think her luck was changing. For the first time in her life she had found a supportive and loving man. Her eldest daughter, Sarah, had found her, after years of believing that her mother was dead, and the two have rebuilt their relationship. She is doing an information technology course, hoping to get a job after years on benefits. She had redoubled her efforts to find out more about her other children, concentrating on Claire and her half-sister Michelle because their social workers were in Essex, where Debra lives.

Claire and Michelle were taken into care when they were aged four and two, while staying with relatives. Although their mother visited them, at first her access was stopped by social workers. "I was told they were getting upset, that I was giving them false hopes," she said. The girls were moved to a foster home in Shropshire until 1994.

Natural parents have a legal right to be kept informed of decisions made about their children's care at six-monthly review meetings. If the parents are not allowed to attend the meetings, then they should be sent minutes. Debra says she was not sent such minutes, and that when she asked social workers for information about her daughters she was given only vague statements.

She also says she did not know that Claire and Michelle had moved to Cheshire to live with the Harts, and that her permission was not sought to change the girls' surname. She consulted a solicitor and wrote formally to Essex Council in September. A partial response was received in December, but contained no detail. Her lawyer, Denise Lester, says: "We were not satisfied with the information."

In April, Thurrock Council took over responsibility for the case, and Denise Lester renewed her at-

tempts to obtain information. Debra's new social worker promised to help her find out more, and at least update the photographs she had of the girls. But no more news came from the council until Debra found the note pushed through her door. She called the police several times that weekend, and was told only that Claire was missing and she would be kept informed. "I was hopeful she might be back in the morning," she said. But the next day a friend showed her a newspaper report with an unmistakable picture of her daughter. Debra read that Claire's coat had been found, and police feared the worst. There was still no word from Thurrock Council, which was responsible for Claire's care.

Debra's next contact with the authorities was a call from Macclesfield police asking her to go to her local police station to give a blood sample for DNA testing. There, as she waited for the police doctor, she was told that Claire's body had been found. She was so distraught that she suffered asthma attacks and developed a severe stammer.

She went to Cheshire to see her daughter's body. "I needed to go and see her one last time to say goodbye. I had never seen a dead body before, and it was worse than I expected. I felt so angry, helpless and frustrated. I looked at her body, then I looked again, and I could see the real person. She looked really young, and as if she was sleeping. I had waited so long to see her again, and this was not the way I wanted to see her."

She feels that there was pressure on her to agree to have Claire buried in Cheshire. In the end, the Harts mourned Claire at a memorial service to which Debra was not invited, and her body came back to Essex to be buried.

It was a hard decision to make. "I wanted to bring her home. I'm not being selfish - who knows where Michelle will be in the future? If she blames me for what I've done I shall tell her that this was Claire's home and this is her home, too." Although Debra is not a Catholic, Claire was given a Catholic funeral. Her headstone will read "Claire Pritchard - latterly known as Claire Hart". Debra is mourning a daughter she hardly knew. "I sit and talk to her at night, telling her how much I miss and love her, asking her to watch over her brothers and sisters."

A spokesman for Essex County Council said that the council's policy was to respect confidentiality and not to discuss individual cases.

"In general, however, where the directorate's plan is alternative substitute care, it is not uncommon for direct contact to be stopped; this may follow an agreement by the Court. Decisions on contact for children are always considered at statutory reviews based on their best interests. Parents would normally be invited to express their views and would receive general details about their children's situation."

Some good has come from the tragedy. The foster-mother caring for Debra's 15-year-old son Daniel contacted her for the first time, to tell her how upset Daniel was to hear of his sister's death. He and his foster-parents have sent flowers, and they are hoping to meet. Debra's face lights up as she talks about her son.

"It is wonderful when everyone involved with a child in care - including the natural parents, the foster-parents, the social workers and all the professionals can work in partnership to promote a child's welfare," says her lawyer, Denise Lester. "Claire's death is a tragedy, and I hope that Debra Pritchard's position will now be sympathetically considered by those responsible for the care of her children."

IRRITATIONS OF MODERN LIFE

9: TINTED CONTACT LENSES
BY INDIA KNIGHT



considered especially desirable owing to his dazzling blue eyes. A friend of mine pursued him relentlessly over many months. When she eventually managed to lure him to her lair, she was most put out to find that the fabulous azure gaze came out last thing and spent the night in a little container of saline solution. Although the man had perfectly nice eyes underneath, they were the colour of faded denim rather than semi-precious stones, and that was the end of that.

Apart from the fact that there is something pretty peculiar about adapting a product originally conceived for the sight-impaired as a fashion accessory, vanity comes into the equation, too. What kind of person seeks shamelessly to embellish their eyes by changing the colour? And why? There is never anything wrong with people's eyes. Noses, yes. Chins, often. Bodies, absolutely. But do you know anyone whose hideous eyes make you recoil with horror?

It is a peculiar, hard-core form of vanity that is at play here, more akin to plastic surgery (brand-new body parts) than to even the most extreme tricks with make-up (enhancing what exists). As far as I am concerned, wearing tinted lenses is a pretty foolproof way of announcing your neuroses and insecurity to the world. Look at me, they say. I dislike the way I look so much that I am wearing fake eyes in improbable colours, and I am hoping to fool you. Alas! You can tell a person by their eyes, never more so than when those eyes are made of plastic.

JP/110/100

This is my fast-track suit

Dressing for the city is an ongoing dilemma for fashion-conscious women. How to be smart and stylish without looking like Ally McBeal? (She's just so... Eighties.) Ditch the tailoring and think sporty. By Belinda Morris

Every so often the fashion industry throws a new word, term or category at us. Before the season is out, we should all be completely au fait with it, dropping it airily into dinner-party conversations and boardroom meetings. We are, of course, totally familiar with "greige" and know just when to bring it into play, who doesn't describe Paul Smith as "classic with a twist"? And as for "lifestyle", we've all seen *Woman's Wear Daily* magazine.

So, here's another one for your sartorial lexicon: urban sportswear. Not, as some might imagine, clothes to wear when playing football on city street corners (although you could, I suppose...) but something rather more sophisticated. It is, however - like so many other nebulous fashion phrases - left wide open to personal interpretation and definition. Thus one woman's urban-sportswear chic zipped jacket may be another's walking-the-dog wind-cheater.

The rules are a little sketchy at present, the only sure one being that this isn't anything to do with real, active, performance stuff that involves getting sweaty.

Just influenced by it. A little bit. The bit that says clothes ought to be comfortable and easy rather than restrictive and tricky. This is sportswear in the American rather than the British sense of the word, but erase any thoughts of "leisure" from your mind because we're not talking Hawaiian shirts and sneakers.

For "urban", read modern, minimal and mostly monochrome (with a few colourful highlights thrown in, such as navy, and brown). So who, as Loyd Grossman might ask, would wear clothes like these?

Well, me for a start. I'd like to submit myself as the (slightly older, but young-at-heart) core customer in the back of the minds of designers and retailers who are launching (or are about to launch) collections that may be categorised as urban sportswear. "Women need more multi-functional, less power-dressing clothes, especially those who are in freelance situations," says Kathy Wuersch, the American designer behind the new Episode Sport line, to be launched this month.

"There are fewer women in nine-to-five positions, so things are easing up," she explains. "Everything is more lifestyle-driven. Women are dressing to suit their own needs, making their own choices, and this tends to be more separates and sportswear-based."

At Episode they identified "a huge gap in the market for better-made relaxed dressing" and decided to fill it. It was also a canny move for the retail group, which, since its introduction to the UK seven years ago, has acquired a reputation for working wardrobes and occasion-wear. Episode Sport could significantly broaden its appeal.

"We're also addressing a more fashion-aware woman who appreciates the technical aspects of new fabrics which are glazed, rubberised, more entertaining, and the fact that classic suits can be spiced up in a way that isn't trashy or throwaway," Kathy adds. The result is a look inspired much more by menswear (rather than being glam, or city-sharp) with tailoring that is less structured (lots of unstructured jackets). "That whole corporate image, competing with a man, thing, seems a very old attitude now," she says.

Finning a generic name to encompass this laid-back but fashionable, no-fuss but modern category isn't straightforward.

This is sportswear in the American sense, but erase any thoughts of 'leisure' from your mind, because we're not talking Hawaiian shirts and sneakers

Kathy admits. The trade calls it, confusingly, a "bridge" market. It forms the link between jeans and formal wear but also can disregard seasons - which tend to be rather blurred these days. "It's an evolution of knit-driven dressing - important for comfort or travel reasons - and the need for 'faster' clothes that don't require so much care but which still don't look sloppy," Kathy says. "It also recognises that we need year-round options, which is why black is still so important."

And grey - in particular grey flannel, which in Episode Sport's autumn collection takes on a soft yet durable, jeansy feel (with masculine overtones). But as this is a line of separate pieces rather than co-ordinates, it mixes in with other fabrics such as leather, jersey, knits and synthetics. Take a pair of drawstring-waist pants in grey flannel, team them with a hooded, pale grey jersey shirt and soft black leather jacket, and you've really demolished the boardroom spirit. A grey pencil skirt teamed with zipped fleece jacket and vest top will do much the same thing, yet both have a strong feeling of presentable, modern workwear.

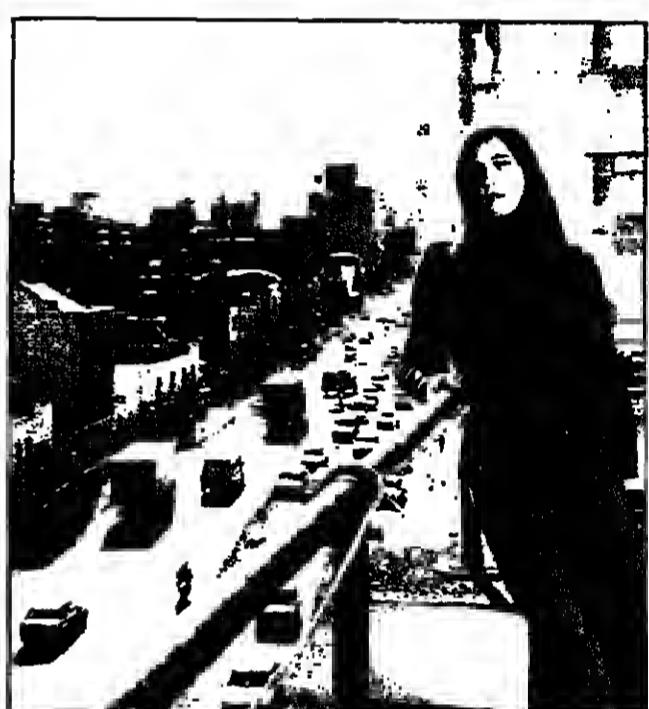
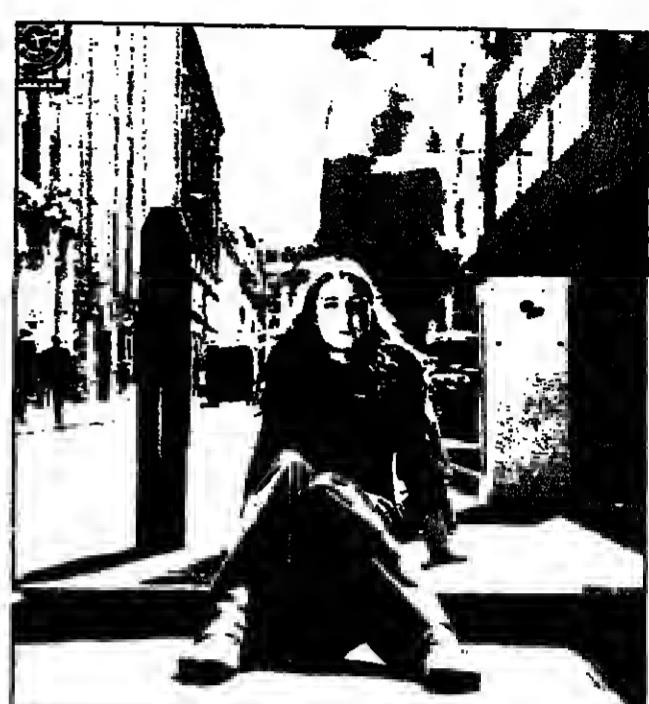
A different look, but a not dissimilar rationale, is found at Judith and Herman Belzazar's Notting Hill shop Wall, which was conceived to fill a specific gap in the market. Both widely travelled people (Herman is Peruvian), they saw a need for clothes designed for women with busy lives. More specifically, they create simple, relaxed yet elegant dresses, skirts, pants and knitwear for us who work from home. Many of their customers are journalists, aged 30-plus, who would rather not just throw on jeans and a sweatshirt every day, based largely on the fact that they may have to leave the house suddenly on an urgent mission (chocolate, in my case).

True to urban sportswear form, the all-natural (Pima cotton, alpaca and wool) simply cut, linear dresses, pared-down knitted jackets (with immaculately detailed jersey linings), long, roomy edge-to-edge cardigans and semi-sheer V-neck sweaters come in reassuringly metropolitan colours such as black and charcoal grey, with muted highlight tones reserved for T-shirts or the odd *pasmina*.

Herman suggests that the ethos of Wall is to create a space within yourself for harmony and tranquillity - a notion that could simply be translated into: clothes that you don't have to think too long and hard about.

There are no nasty rough edges or tight, restricting waistbands. "We wanted to design clothes that can change with you - a woman's body doesn't stay the same shape throughout the month"; and as this isn't high fashion, styles evolve from season to season, adding longevity to the list of plus points. The Wall customer is the type who has a penchant for labels such as Issey Miyake and Yohji Yamamoto, but as a Wall cotton-knit dress is a mere snip at £25, she is likely to buy one in every shade and then treat herself to a rather more costly alpaca and silk shawl. And since this cool, minimally decorated shop also sells lifestyle, she can also pick up a set of tactile earth-ware bowls and a pair of alpaca fur (totally PC, I'm assured) slippers.

Patricia Davidson of the mail-order company Kingshill, is also taking a trip down the urban sportswear route, but like Episode, she is aiming to catch the eye of a customer who is younger (in attitude). Kingshill Studio is a definite split away from the mainline collection of own-label and designer brands, offering a more fashionable,



SPORTS RESULTS

Above left: grey hooded jumper, £29.50, by La Redoute (mail-order and enquiries 0500 777777); grey wool skirt, £120, by Kingshill Studio (mail-order and enquiries 01494 890555); black sparkly mary-jane shoes, £67.99, by Hobbs, 84 Kings Road, London, SW3, and branches nationwide (enquiries 0171-536 5550)

Top right: black stretch V-necked dress, £189, by Wall (0171-243 1623); grey flat-fronted trousers, £37.99, by La Redoute, as before; grey fleece Boston sandals, £61.95, by Birkenstock, 37 Neal Street, London WC2 (enquiries 0171-603 2644)

Above: petrol-blue V-neck jumper, £129, by Wall, as before; grey drawstring trousers, £109, and grey hooded zip-top, £89, both by Episode Sport, 172 Regent Street, London W1, and branches (enquiries 0171-589 4279)

Left: black funnel-neck tunic top, £219, by Nicole Farhi, 158 New Bond Street, London W1, and branches (enquiries 0171-499 8368); black and white check dress, £99, by Episode Sport, as before

Below left: broad-striped polo-neck, £25, from Kingshill Studio, as before; grey three-quarter-length trousers, £39.99, from Morgan, 393 Oxford Street, London W1, and branches nationwide, enquiries 0171-383 2888

slightly less expensive contemporary range of workwear and "urban weekend" wear. "It's a manish, borrowed-from-the-boys look, with styling details that are more directional, like longer jackets, higher buttoning and new trouser shapes," she

explains. "It's got more of an edge to it, but I'm a great believer in comfort, so nothing's too tight and there's lots of Lycra mixed in for ease."

So much for this autumn. If you really like to be ahead, then you'll be thrilled to learn that Sportmax, of the giant Italian MaxMara group, is to have a baby sister next spring. This is an advance warning of Sportmax Code, yet another urban sportswear look, also directed at the younger-thinking women ("We're not ageist," insists Giorgio Guidotti, of MaxMara). This, too, is minimal in its colour message (black, white, indigo, denim, with touches of pink and sky blue) and has absolutely no trace of country weekend, walking-the-dogness about it.

Nor is it a nightclub look. "It's urban, connected to music videos and street life," says Mr Guidotti. And since there are British designers in the team, that means London as well as downtown New York. Code is jeans-based, but in the loosest sense, since there are few western touches and lots of non-denim fabrics. Four different cuts of jeans integrate with stretch-cotton poplin, three-quarter-sleeved shirts, coated cotton cabans, loose slash-necked cotton sweaters and tie-dyed T-shirts.

Clam-diggers look surprisingly good under neat shirt-waister dresses, while an ankle-skimming, drawstring-hemmed linen skirt teams up beautifully with anything from gingham Riviera-style shirts to fleece tops.



Photographer: Martin Crook
Stylist: Holly Wood
Hair and make-up: Sophie Teamby using Cosmetics A la Carte
Model: Rosie at Select

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AT ALL GOOD
NEWSAGENTS



Muscling up to the odaiko drum, a £90,000 percussion colossus

Mark Coutts-Smith

Hit and run squad

The instruments cost up to £90,000 and the training is hard labour. The Kodo drummers are back, and they mean business. By Philip Sweeney

Not all of Japan is plunged into recession, readying the self-disembowelling gear as it awaits the latest economic statistics. An enterprise known as Kodo, for example, holder of the 1994 Japanese Foreign Minister's Commendation award for export performance, is romping through the 17th year of its existence with an expanded apprentice intake, brisk building programme and buoyant morale.

Kodo's products are percussion, basically, and spectacle – a touring show of manic intensity and precision, centred around loin-clothed drummers flailing at oversized specimens of great traditional talko drums, of which the largest, the odaiko, measures four feet in circumference. It consists of a single, hollowed Cameroonian kaya-ki hardwood log capped with the hide of a 1½-ton Holstein bull, and costs up to £20,000 to build and £4,500 to re-build, the odaiko equivalent of a 50,000-km service. Traditionally used as an adjunct of Shinto religious ceremonies, Noh theatre and rural folklore, the talko drums fell into disuse after the war, being associated with the discredited and defeated imperial culture. Twenty years ago, Kodo started a re-evaluation and modernisation of the instruments, which has turned the talko into a hobby or a cult for thousands of young Japanese and has made stars, and a successful business corporation, out of the 40-strong Kodo troupe.

To visit Kodo's HQ, you take the bullet-train west from Tokyo to the rice and sake city of Niigata, and thence a two-and-a-half-hour ferry ride over the Sea of Japan to the rain-lashed island of Sado, where, in my case, a dour young Kodo marketing lady (ex-Nissen) in a white Mazda sports car is waiting.

Why Sado? Because it is a historic centre of gold-mining and arts, explains Nobuko Yamada as we drive through terraced hills of persimmon orchards. The mine-owners and feudal landlords paid for the numerous Noh stages, 30 or so, that dot the island, and there is still much traditional ceremony to study.

Down a winding, forested drive lies the Kodo Village: a series of long, white buildings with sweeping tiled double roofs and wooden walls, patios and houses under construction. Takashi Akamine, the manager, shows me the antique wooden beams and sliding paper partitions of the administration building, created around a remodelled farm-

house, and the great rehearsal hall. Sleek, lacquered talko with ornate brass carrying-rings gleam at one end. At the other lurks the wooden bulk of the huge, lantern-bedecled cart used to wheel on the odaiko in Kodo's *pièce de résistance*.

Kodo began in 1981 as an offshoot of another group, Ondekosa, formed in the Seventies on Sado. The original inspiration was to create something new with the traditional percussion used at Shinto shrines, but also in harvest ceremonies, even to scare birds away in the fields. This was the first time talko music had been put on stage as performance, and the other interests of the Kodo founders – jazz, Western rock – dictated the

At six the following evening, the Kodos prepare for one of their annual concerts for the local community, and as unmoveable. Squatting quintets of cymbal-players create multiple cross rhythms succeeded by squads of martial athletes thrashing low-slung drums, dancers with swords and pony-tail wigs, wispy flute pieces and plaintive shamanic interludes. And talko literally by the cartload: big, medium and small, deep and shallow, rope-tensioned and tack-headed, climaxed by the great mobile odaiko with its black and white swirl-patterned drum head, beaten with two small fence posts and immense theatricality by its loin-clothed drummer and applauded warmly, if politely, by the Sado audience.

But what is it with the Japanese and snoring? Throughout, the audience nod off, heads slumped neatly at 45 degrees, as they do on the Metro, and as, indeed I feel like doing. Do people often sleep during Kodo performances? I ask afterwards. "Ah yes, they feel very comfortable – the drum beat evokes the beating of a mother's heart to a fetus." Meanwhile, the Kodos go off for a post-show celebration of orgiastic proportions for them – noo-ooes, beer and a singsong.

Viscerally hypnotic or a touch monotonous, modern talko music has taken a powerful grip in Japan, where thousands of amateur talko groups and dozens of professional ones – led by Ondekosa, Kodo's mother group and rival – now exist, rescuing the once failing traditional instrument industry. Led by its three-man board, operating on five-year plans, Kodo forges ahead of the pack, organising annual drum festivals on Sado, and outreach education projects, writing Hollywood soundtracks (*The Hunted* was the last, in 1995; another secret as yet, is under way), rejecting cigarette adverts and accepting beer ones, creating a talko act for the *Cirque du Soleil* in Las Vegas, and taking orders from new converts for specially commissioned drums at every concert. (More than 100 talko groups have now been formed in North America.)

Tonight, Kodo are back in London for the eighth time. With the yen down at 230 to the pound, there's never been a better time to splash out on an odaiko.

The Kodo drummers are at the Royal Festival Hall tonight only with Evelyn Glennie, and then until 16 Aug. £15-£25. 0171-960 4242

The rigorous Kodo apprentice scheme would have an average Western teenager seeking legal advice and trauma counselling

non-traditional elements of the product: self-conscious virtuosity, solo improvisations, drama and spectacle. Pure Japanese temperament, it seems, dictated the extraordinary physical and mental dedication that suffuse both the Kodo's performance and its organisation.

Which brings us to the apprentice scheme. Back into another Mazda MX5, and we head round a winding and squally coastal road to a spartan wooden schoolhouse on a hill. Here, in the original Kodo HQ, are based the 18 young Kodo apprentices who, after a rigorous selection process from among hundreds of applicants, pay £200 a month to undergo a training programme that would have an average Western teenager seeking legal advice and trauma counselling in double-quick time.

Up at 4.30am, a 10-km run along the coast road, classes and housework all day, bed at 8pm, Sunday off to go into town and look at bookshops. "Why?" I ask Yashiki Oi, the avuncular if ascetic-looking head of the apprentice centre. "It's necessary to make good citizens of potential Kodo members," he says, "as well as give them the stamina for performance."

What the butler never saw

Joe Orton's lost works reveal a taste for the bizarre in the banal. By Paul Taylor

A certain 20th century dramatist invented the following titles for works projected but never written: *By the Short Hair: Gwen, Maddened by Lust: The Four-Letter Word Revue and Men and Boys?* Mum, I think we can certainly rule out Enid Bagnold. A more generous clue would be to quote some of the exchanges intended for insertion in such future pieces: "Are you a good boy?" "Yes." "Why are you wasting my time then?" And: "Anyone over 40 is led to believe that the younger generation are sexually insatiable. Isn't this true?" "No, sir." "Another cherished belief exploded. The iconoclasts of today's youth are terrifying."

Values stood on their heads: the formal, epigrammatic style lending incongruous sonority to louche, subversive sentiments: the author can only be that so-called "Oscar Wilde of Welfare State" gentility", Joe Orton.

The might-have-beens are particularly frustrating in his case because his career was cut off in its prime. From his break through in 1964 with *Entertaining Mr Sloane* to his savage murder by lover Kenneth Halliwell, Orton enjoyed just three years of success. The apogee came with the 1966 *Evening Standard* Best Play

Award for *Loot* – the gleefully scandalous farce involving a coffin, a corpse, a pile of stolen bank notes, a couple of lustful bisexuals and a psychopathically corrupt copper – which transfers tonight to the West End in David Grindley's much-praised Chichester revival.

Posthumous publication and performance have made us familiar with the output of Orton's extremely fertile last few months (*What the Butler Saw*, the Beatles' screen play, *Up Against It*, the creepy unblinking *Diaries*). But what about the work he produced at the other end of his writing life – that decade of rejection slips when he laboured on five *Firbankian* novels with Halliwell and then on independent fiction and plays?

In October, new light will be thrown on this period of his creativity with the first publication of a 1957 novel, *Between Us Girls*, along with his first, full-length drama, *Fred and Madge* (1959) and *The Visitors* (1961), a play set in a hospital. What do we learn from these pieces about the early development of the "Ortonesque"?

Slight, camp, and inconsequential, *Between Us Girls* is the diary of an aspiring starlet, Susan Hope, whose optimistic prattle signals a determined re-



The subversive Joe Orton

fusal to acknowledge the tackiness of tier lot. Using language as a prime disguise for depraved conduct or circumstances is a marked habit of the characters in Orton's mature work. The more outrageous the behaviour, the more studied the verbal pretence of propriety – and the worse the overall impression.

In *Between Us Girls*, Susan is given her break at Soho's Rainier Revuebar and is rightously put out when a friend dares to suggest that this launch pad is something less than the Old Vic. Leaving that establishment for what she has been led to believe is a three-year contract with an exotic Mexican night-club, she sings to the romantic fantasy ("It's

like a dream, isn't it?") until disabused by a fellow newcomer who remembers having seen their surroundings in a film about the white slave trade. Whereupon Susan veers into an evasive girlishness, preternaturally coy and plaid for one who has just discovered she's imprisoned in a brothel: "We sat quite still, each one thinking her own thoughts. The doves cooed. The breeze ruffled the water. And I remembered – so many little things".

With the two soon-to-be-published plays, it's the difference in manner that is striking. *The Visitors* is naturalistic, often seeming to give you a foreshortening of Alan Bennett in its ear for the bizarre in the banal: "He had a few words with Sister on Friday. On Saturday he was dead. You can't put it plainer than that," declares the sick old man, Kemp, whose hulkingly cheerful daughter bant (à la Kath in *Slone*) the least allusion to her pleasantness during her visits.

Fred and Madge, by contrast, starts off in an absurdist, self-consciously theatrical world where the deadening routines of proletarian Labour are symbolised by Madge's proud work trying to carry water in a sieve and Fred's Sisyphian chore of rolling boulders up a ramp. The play then

swerves into increasingly fantastical territory courtesy of Lewis Carroll and Firdman, with England finally abandoned for India, but not before Fred has destroyed modern British architecture by taking groups out to laugh at (thus crashing masonry) or before Fred's gardener-father develops belated and bewildering green fingers and buries the country in forest.

In a mature work like *Loot*, the relationships have to be played for real, the violence must shock and the homosexuality feel utterly natural. At the same time, you need a stylised setting and a heightened reality in the performances to allow for the strong, simultaneous sense that *Loot* is a parodic meta-play. An intriguing glimpse of Ortonesque anarchy without the reality. *Fred and Madge* also furnishes an exchange that could be the epigraph to his whole radically subversive oeuvre: "Do you want to ruin society and civilisation with your laughter?" "Yes, oh yes."

Loot is at the Vaudeville until Oct 17 (0171 836 9987). On 10 October, Nick Hern Books publish *'Between Us Girls'* (hardback £12.99) and *Fred and Madge* and *The Visitors* (hardback £12.99, paperback £7.99).

Mstislav Rostropovich steers, with varying success, a huge National Youth Orchestra

Youth movements

IT WOULD be nice to think that advances in our musical education system have enabled our "young persons" to show us around the orchestra for a change. But we know better.

Still, the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain continues to flourish, and Benjamin Britten's *Variations and Fugue on a Theme of Purcell* – better known as his Young Person's Guide – made for a package a timely gesture of defiance at the start of Saturday's Prom. Who will prevail, it said. Who's guiding whom now?

Well, Mstislav Rostropovich on this occasion, though such was his ponderous and circumspect direction of this showpiece of curtain-risers that I'm not entirely sure that the "little blighters" (as Britten might have referred to them) might not have been better off finding their own way round the exhibit. True, there's not necessarily a whole lot of safety in these kind of numbers. Most of the winds were in multiples of seven. That's a lot to bulk to shift. Purcell's splendid theme bowed in like an overly corpulent knight of the realm, groaning under the sheer weight of his livery. Would he ever make it to Geave alone through the fugue, I wondered? And yet there was sufficient soloistic talent on display here to have made more of the individual variations if only Rostropovich had let them run with the hall. The trombones and tubas, for instance, sounded as if they were gridlocked somewhere in the vicinity of Valhalla.

Rostropovich was again

PROMS

NATIONAL YOUTH ORCHESTRA
ROYAL ALBERT HALL

Knowledge), and retribution (Hell) come as a package, say Bosch and Berkeley (take note, members of the NYO). So all is not as it first seems in the diaphanous "pleasure dome" that is Berkeley's orchestral superstructure. The hot, breathy growl of the cuica (a percussion instrument otherwise known as the "lion's roar"), the snap, crackle, and pop of percussion, the farfing voices of violin, soprano saxophone and trombone, subvert, violate, and corrupt from on stage and around the hall. The ceremony of innocence is under fire from the irresistible force of nature in all its consonance and dissonance.

Berkely's big-hearted lyricism is always, for me, the spiritual core of his music, but the relish with which it is corrupted – as in the raunchy, Varese-like dance at the climax of the piece – shows him in touch with his animal instincts. *Earthly Delights* does not ultimately pay off as satisfactorily as did its predecessor *The Secret Garden*, where the secret was so spectacularly "outed" at the close, but it's part of a continuing process which finds him writing as he wants to write, and with greater spontaneity.

Rostropovich was again

somewhat feeling his way through the thicket of this unfamiliar garden. *Shostakovich's Tenth Symphony* was another matter. Suddenly he was the hot line to the composer. From the murmur of despondency at the start, through the shrill dementia (eight clarinets stridently assertive) of the

orchestra – a glimpse of Stalin's screaming skull through the firestorm – to the jubilant self-assertion of the close, this was terrifically mature work from the NYO. Significantly, it was the introspection that stayed with you: the two clarinets, for instance, so tentatively, heartbreakingly conveying desolation in the aftermath of the first movement's great upheaval.

A greater upheaval ensued

the following night. Prokofiev's *Cantata on the Twentieth Anniversary of the October Revolution* was conceived (and realised) as a massive vote of confidence in the communist system. To Stalin – from Russia with love. His words, and those of Marx and Lenin, are the emotive backbone of the piece. Irony of ironies, though, the Committee for Artistic Affairs declared it "unworthy of performance". Stalin and his cronies liked the words but not the tunes. And yet these are tunes of glory, and some. And on Sunday Mark Elder, the BBC Symphony, BBC Symphony Chorus, Philharmonia Chorus, and more brass than you could shake a stick at (a full-blown military band, no less, amid the arena promenades) redefined the term "socialist realism". Like all good revolutionaries, they came out singing, they came with their own accordion band in tow; they came armed (gunfire from the gallery, Lenin himself (well, Gerard McBurney in a flat cap, in fact) screamed encouragement through a megaphone.

The Committee were right

about this piece but for the

wrong reasons. It's an affront,

it's crude, it's corny – but it's an event. And where else would anyone take this much trouble over it?

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EDINBURGH FESTIVAL '98

Diana, the queen of laughs?

A comedy about Charles and Diana, with her played by a man – bad taste or catharsis? By Dominic Cavendish

ON BEHALF of Desmond Dingle, the artistic director of the National Theatre of Brent, the actor Patrick Barlow wishes to express complete surprise that anyone might take offence at the theatre's latest production, *Love Upon the Throne: Charles and Diana – the true story*. "He just wouldn't understand it if people found it offensive," he explains. "He thought Princess Diana was wonderful. He loves the Royal Family. All of them."

It's hard not to treat this statement with as much suspicion as one would a piece of unattended baggage during a terrorist bombing campaign. Desmond Dingle's all-embracing enthusiasms are the stuff of satire. Each production undertaken by the National Theatre of Brent, since its rapturously received inception at the 1980 Edinburgh Fringe, has attempted to tackle a lofty theme with due reverence and attention: the charge of the Light Brigade, the black hole of Calcutta, the French Revolution and the life of Christ are just a few. But because of the size of the company – just Dingle and a put-upon sidekick – each show, solemnly performed in matching grey suits à la Gilbert and George, always falls far short of its grand intention.

The disparity – which grew out of a period in the late Seventies when Barlow was appearing at a children's theatre in Brent Park and at the National – has the potential to be devastatingly funny. When applied to the most famously mismatched couple

of the century, it also has the potential to be intensely controversial. That a man (John Ramm, who plays Dingle's assistant, Raymond Box) will be taking on the role of Diana might be viewed as more than simply incongruous to some. To those who've paid to show respect at Althorpe, it could be sacrilege.

A few other shows in Edinburgh this year have raised eyebrows: Pip Upton's *Adolf*, an address by the Fibres to an imagined audience in Berlin at the hour of his suicide; and *Myra and Me*, a play about a group of Hull graduates, one of whom has been commissioned to make a TV programme about Hindley. But these represent old taboos, prompting knee-jerks of disapproval. And neither are killed as comedies. If there has been no outcry about *Love Upon the Throne* as yet, that may be because the National Theatre of Brent is not returning calls from tabloid journalists. And there have been calls.

Barlow suggests that the absurdly pompous Dingle has no idea why his shoestring productions are so popular because he is unable to see their funny side. However, he cannot plead the same obliviousness if splatters of laughter are generated at *Diana*'s expense. He explains himself, with watchful, wary eyes, during a rehearsal break, keeping a very straight face throughout.

In the same way that he has finally reached his character's age (51), so he differs very little from Dingle when it comes to assessing the potential for controversy. The production, which was due to start rehearsals on 1 September last year, was immediately shelved at the news of Diana's death. This was not done, he stresses, because of fears about the show's content, but because "everyone was very raw about her; in a state of shock. I was deeply moved, too. Only horrible, hardened old cynics aren't prepared to admit that the whole country was knocked back by it."

Six months later, however, he returned to the story, prepared to lop off a scene here or there. This isn't the story of Diana, he insists, but "the story of Charles and Diana. It's a play about a relationship, a relationship that was fraught with many difficulties and which finally ended. It begins at their meeting and ends at the point of divorce. Diana's death is not alluded to at all."

But even so, doesn't the fact of her death change everything? He shakes his head. "The relationship between

Charles and Diana is one of the great mythic relationships of our time. It still needs addressing. Their marriage went horribly sour, as many people's do. To an extent, they were already up there on stage, acting it all out for the rest of us."

To deny the reality of her life is to be in denial about her death, he believes. "Everyone knows that Diana had a huge personal struggle. There's a danger of treating her as a saint. If she were alive now, she would be treated as she used to be by the general press, as this outrageous, fascinating but indulgent creature. I also think that if she were alive now, she would laugh at the lightness of this show."

That light playing style didn't immediately suggest itself when Barlow first considered writing something three years ago. "I thought it might work as high opera. It certainly couldn't be staged naturally, or it would descend into a soap opera. Then I realised that I already had a way of telling the story

that would retain the truth of the situation while achieving some kind of distance. Comedy is an enormous distance. It allows you simply to observe what is happening." The effect, he hopes, is quasi-Brechtian, noting that Ramm's "Diana" is "not really a female impersonation. He doesn't attempt to be her and in a weird way gets a quality in her that a woman couldn't get, because she would be too close to it."

And in a weird way, he may be right. I am briefly allowed in to watch director Martin Duncan (a Brent regular) putting the pair through their paces. What I see is both haunting and ridiculous in its suburban ordinariness. They walk through the scene in which Diana accidentally picks up the phone to hear Charles talking dirty with Camilla – the dilemma turns into a spot of audience participation: "Do I bury it under the carpet or do I listen in?" he asks, in a feeble Essex whine, before Dingle steps out of character and tells him to shut it.

The scene no one in the room can resist chuckling at – in which Diana runs amok in the Palace having told Charles she's going to throw herself downstairs rather than watch the Queen's Christmas Message – is later axed. But there is no getting away from the fact that there are plenty more gags where that came from. The moment divorce is decided upon is played as a slip of the tongue. "No," says Ramm's "Diana" gleefully. "Divorce is what you said, and divorce is what you'll get."

"If people get outraged by the idea of this, there's nothing I can do," Barlow says. "But if people come and see it, I would be very surprised if they are. I believe our heart is in the right place." Still, it might be worth leaving through the Assembly Rooms backdoor tonight, just in case.

Love Upon the Throne, Assembly Rooms, Venue 3 (0131-226 2429, 4.30pm, Tomorrow to 5 Sept; then Bush, London, W12 (0181-743 3388, 6-26 Sept)

Funny but frank

COMEDY

LYNN FERGUSON: FRANK GILDED BALLOON

BEFORE HER show begins, Lynn Ferguson comes on stage, apologises for not being very good and then retreats, promising: "This isn't the beginning, the beginning will be better than this." As if she need worry. Ferguson is a natural – a comic who could, recite the bus timetable and have the audience eating out of her hands.

Ferguson spends much of her year as a compere, artfully stringing together other people's acts. Her deceptively faconic opening spiel is less false modesty than Ferguson playing warm-up act to her own show. Among the exquisitely observed types appearing on Ferguson's one-woman bill are softly spoken Irish wit Michael O'Leary, stand-up virgin Jenny Park, ex-beauty consultant and airhead comedienne Anita Ross, student Rob McCuskell, Butlin boy Billy Murphy and American dyke Al Gore.

But *Frank* isn't just a wicked slice of character comedy – Ferguson's fictional jokers get to tell good gags too. After delivering some desultory dispatches from the sex war, O'Leary tells his audience "I want to die in my sleep like my father, not screaming like his passengers", while the dim-witted Anita Ross reflects on the lessons learnt in her previous career as beautician by noting that "at people use more soap".

Ferguson glues these disparate acts together with her own conversational banter, and if there's one criticism of Ferguson's show, it's that she's perhaps too good a stand-up. Her impressions of Anita, Al and the rest are funny enough but it's when Ferguson is up on stage playing herself that she shines.

LAURE SPENCER

Gilded Balloon Studio Theatre, 7pm (0131 226 2151). To 31 Aug.

A version of this review appeared in some editions of yesterday's paper.

FESTIVAL EYE

CAROL DJERASSI, the world-renowned father of the contraceptive pill, is a stickler for detail. His first play, premiered at this year's Festival, *An Immaculate Misconception*, centres round the attempt by a scientist to have a child using an advanced form of in vitro fertilisation known as ICSI. All she needs to do is get her hands on some sperm. Which means a nightly discharge of Neutrogena face wash into a condom. According to Djerassi, it has just the right kind of foamy texture. "These things are kind of important," says the 74-year-old.

TICKET OFFERS

A free pair of tickets will go to the first readers to come to the appropriate box office this morning with a copy of today's *Independent*, subject to availability.

Navelgazing in *pop.cult.uk*. The artists formerly known as the Edinburgh Comedy Revue with a sketch show for the millennium. 10 pairs available, Pleasance Theatre, Venue 33 (2.50pm).

Ronnie Drew in *I Hardly Knew You*. Former Dubliners frontman with songs, anecdotes and readings. 5 pairs. Observer Assembly Room 3, 5.45pm.

Stirring Effort in *Take Two*. Two comedians and a foul-tempered chicken. 5 pairs. Gilded Balloon – Backstage II (3.30pm).

Cambridge Medics Revue in *Juicy Seizure*. Not very medical, and nothing to do with the title... Gilded Balloon – Upstairs. 5 pairs, 6.00pm.



The two-man cast of the National Theatre of Brent whose 'Charles and Diana – the true story', is bound to offend Geraint Lewis



Gentle charmer Ben Moor

Magical realist delivers a sentimental education

COMEDY

BEN MOOR
THE PLEASANCE

IT'S NOT often that the words wistful, intelligent, fantastical could be applied to a comedian plugging their trade on the Fringe. More often than not, your chosen comic will spit a whole hour out of a couple of stunts, shouting very LOUD and the most reliable fall-back position, treating the audience to a few variations on a knob gag.

Not Ben Moor. His new monologue, *My Last Week With Modolia*, is a gentle tale of boy meets girl. Admittedly, it's not every day that a cynical,

act that pleasure in the telling of fables, a magic realist's delight in the bizarre coupled with a host of garlicky puns, curlicues and tangents that entice and enthrall the audience.

It's refreshing that a comedian has the audacity to produce a show that is unashamedly sentimental, never resorts to shock tactics but instead relies on the craft of writing and Moor's etiolated and expressive physique.

"Be a fly. Be very a fly." Modolia

tells Moor's character. "I've never quite known what that meant," he replies. "She was very old, you see." That's the telling sentiment: we spend an hour in Moor's company with a mix of bemusement and awe, complicit in the tale, drawn in, without ever losing sight of its beautiful and strange otherworldliness.

It remains to be seen whether the Perrier judges will be as daring in their choice of best act, as Ben Moor has been in trading stand-up for something far more poetic and ungraspable. If their decision last year

to pass over the comic genius of the Right Size's *Come Here Often* (because it didn't conform to their narrowly defined idea of comedy) is anything to go by, the chances are they won't. But it would be their loss. Don't miss out on the chance to be with the fairies in this boundary-subverting performance from a truly gifted storyteller.

Continues until 31 August (0131 556 6550)

MARK WILSON

DAY PLANNER

YOUR HOUR-BY-HOUR GUIDE TO WHAT'S BEST AT THE FESTIVAL AND FRINGE

9AM

CHILDREN
9.00-10.15 Little Shop of Horrors. Hit musical comedy for children and adults including free breakfast. C too (venue 4), St Columba's by the Castle, Johnston Terrace (225 5105). Price £5 (£4). Last day.

10AM

ART
10.00-6.00 Contemporary American Prints. Includes artists Andy Warhol, Jim Dine and Sam Francis. All work is on sale. Edinburgh Printmakers Workshop and Gallery (venue 144), 23 Union Street (557 2479). To 12 Sept.

11AM

CHILDREN
11.45-12.45 Who's Afraid of Monsters. Seven friends go on an adventure. The Famous Grouse House (venue 34), 5 Chambers St (220 5606). Price £5 (£3). 12-14 Aug.

12 NOON

THEATRE
12.00-1.45 Joy. Futuristic thriller. Abbotsford Scott (venue 102), 18 Morningside Road (447 1122). Price £3 (£2.50). To 22 Aug (not 16).

1PM

THEATRE
1.40-2.55 David Benson – Nothing But Pleasure. A new show following on from the



Carl Djerassi: Theatre, 1.50

success of his first show *Think No Evil of Us*. Assembly Rooms (venue 3), 54 George Street (226 2428). Price £3 (£2). 12-13, 23-27, 1-5 Sept.

THEATRE
1.50-3.05 An Immaculate Misconception. A brave new world story of twin births by Carl Djerassi, the American scientist who invented the Pill. C too (venue 4), St Columba's by the Castle, Johnston Terrace (225 5105). Price £5 (£3). 12-31 Aug (not 16).

CHILDREN
2.00-2.55 Rumpelstiltskin. Royal Mile Primary School (venue 59), Canongate. Price £3 (£2.50). 12-15, 17, 22-23 Aug.

3PM

DANCE
3.30-4.30 A Movin' and a Groovin'. An entertainment complete with a chance to learn to dance. Graffiti (venue 90), 60 The Pleasance (225 8330). Price £4.50 (£3.50). 12-17, 19-28, 31 Aug.

4PM

COMEDY
4.30-5.30 Hitchcock's Half Hour – Psycho Vertigo Disco. Debut for rising stars. Pleasance (venue 33), 60 The Pleasance (556 6550). Price £5.50 (£5.50). 12-13, 20-21, 25-27 Aug.

5PM

THEATRE
5.00-7.00 Over the Edge. A programme of minimalist one-man plays all the way from Zimbabwe. Demarc European Art Foundation (venue 22), St Mary's School, York Lane/Albany Street (556 8408). Price £5 (£3). 12-15, 24-29 Aug.

6PM

THEATRE
6.15-7.15 Hogfather. By Terry Pratchett, adapted by Adam Spears. Where's the big fat man? Christmas comes early in this magical open-air premiere. Edinburgh College of Art (venue 73), Lauriston Place (0372 598 336). Price £7 (£5). 12-29 Aug (not 17, 24).



Andy Warhol: Art, 10am

THEATRE
11.10-12.25 Slags. 90s club life youth culture. Southside (venue 82), 117 Nicolson Street (667 2212). Price £5 (£3.50). 12-15, 23-30 Aug.

7PM

COMEDY
8.15-9.15 Mark Doherty – Fascinating Things. Unique, surreal standup. Pleasance (venue 33), 60 The Pleasance (556 6550). Price £7.50 (£6.50). 12-13, 16-20, 23, 25-27 Aug.

8PM

COMEDY
8.00-9.00 Club Graffiti. Amsterdam's New Cool Collective. Fridays, Midnight Blue; Saturdays, Lizard Lounge. Graffiti (venue 90), corner of Broughton and East London streets (557 8330). Price £3/£5/£7/£9.

9PM

COMEDY
9.30-10.30 Chris Addison. Straight from touring with Jenny Eclair. Pleasance (venue 33), 60 The Pleasance (556 6550). Price £7 (£6). 12, 13, 16-20, 23, 24, 26, 27 Aug.

10PM

THEATRE
10.15-11.45 Rupert Street Lonely Hearts Club. Bittersweet play by Jonathan Harvey. Bedlam Theatre (venue 49), 11b Bistro Place (225 9893). Price £5 (£4). 12-22 Aug (not 16).

11PM

CABARET
11.45-1.00 Mika – Ahi Aiahuia (Beautiful Fire). Cabaret meets karaoke. Assembly Rooms (venue 3), 54 George Street (226 2282). Price £5.50 (£5.50). 12-13, 16, 18-20

The e-mailing, web-surfing personal assistants have arrived. By Nicole Walsh

Talk to my cyber-secretary

A GOOD secretary, as any boss knows, make the office tick like clockwork. Being able to juggle phones, fax machines and constant queries while arranging lunch meetings makes a secretary indispensable.

In the past five years a secretary's job has altered dramatically. The key to this is technology. More and more companies expect their secretaries to be comfortable with the Holy Trinity of computer packages: Word, for word-processing; Excel, for spreadsheets; and Powerpoint, for presentation graphics.

But big-league businesses now demand more than this. They argue that a confident use of e-mail and the Internet are essential secretarial skills.

Industry experts say they are witnessing the rise of the "cyber-secretary", to use the latest buzz-word. Miriam Knight, of the recruitment company Secretaries Plus, says that if secretaries are to be successful in today's marketplace they must be well versed in new technology. "We are getting more and more requests for secretaries with multi-media skills," she says. "With many of the leading firms, particularly the banks, it would be inconceivable to place somebody who didn't know how to use new technology."

"Companies expect their secretaries to use e-mail, both externally and internally, and to be familiar with the Internet and Scheduler, the electronic diary package that can be plugged into a computer and mutually updated, even if a boss is thousands of miles away. It is not enough to be fluent in the three main packages any more."

Secretaries who use the latest skills say that their working lives have changed dramatically for the better. The Internet and e-mail are swifter and more efficient than their paper equivalents. Gone are the days when a PA would have to stick around until 8 or 9 o'clock at night just to speak to American colleagues - a time 27-year-old Abigail Morris well remembers: "When I first started as a PA eight years ago it was par for the course to stay in the office late at night or to get in early so we could fax or speak to colleagues in America



For Sarah De Souza, technology means she can work from anywhere

Andrew Buurman

or Singapore. All that changed when e-mail was introduced. You always know if it has been sent correctly, so there's no need to hang around."

Abigail, who is currently working as a temp for Bank of America in the City of London, says that capitalising on the available technology is the only way she and her jet-setting boss can keep in contact. "My boss spends one or two days a week in our Milan office," she says. "When he's out of the country he still relies on me for all the usual PA duties, and the best way for us to communicate is via e-mail."

No matter where he is, I can keep him up to date with the latest developments in London and even organise his electronic diary from thousands of

miles away. I can send him sensitive documents via e-mail and know that they won't go astray, which is something you can't do with the fax. Because I'm always based in London, my boss has come to rely on me being at the hub of UK activity. If he wants information quickly, the e-mail is really the only way to get it."

Sarah De Souza, 32, is a PA to the managing director of Grayling, a PR company. She uses her e-mail every day to set up meetings and pull together important documents from other managers within the company for her boss to read. "If I didn't have the technology at my fingertips, I would be lost," she says. "My boss travels extensively and it makes keeping in close touch so much easier. It's the first

thing I look at in the morning. I also make great use of the Internet when we are carrying out research on a company that we want to make a business pitch for."

Like Abigail, Sarah believes e-mail is more reliable than faxing. "Instead of printing a document, all I have to do is press a button and the e-mail is away. It saves time on the little jobs."

With the demand for technically efficient secretaries accelerating it is unsurprising that they are joining ranks with the office cyberpunks. Abigail Morris claims: "My boss won't mind me saying that he is not all that well versed in technology. I think he relies on me to deal with things like the Internet. Which, I suppose, is no bad thing."

Wot, no phone calls?



THE TEMP

IT'S a strange thing, but nobody seems to have personal phone calls these days. When I first started work in the school holidays, personal phone calls seemed to be what most people did for a living: calls to husbands, calls to girlfriends, calls to electrical suppliers to check the prices of microwaves. Calls about what happened last night; calls about birthdays, lunch, trains; calls to the gas board; calls to BT about cut-off home phones; calls to book tables. The big news story was about firms putting call bars on 0891 numbers after employees had run up thousands of pounds getting young women to help them with their pocket massage technique (I found a book called *Pocket Massage for Stress Relief* in someone's bathroom the other day, and it's become my favourite euphemism, along with Lewinsky).

But over the past four or five years, the interest level in offices has gone down. Time was when you'd have endless things to think about: the affair to your left, the divorce to your right, the nursing home fees directly behind you. Now, it's nothing but e-mail: the rattle of keys and the occasional cackle. E-mail brings a whole new dimension to time-wasting: employees fill entire days composing lists of things the sexes really mean when they say something else, forwarding them to mates then discussing them ad nauseam.

My friend Tony is an IT bod, so he knows exactly what's going on in the Net in his building. If ever

a sweepstake going about their chances of scoring with every woman in the company. They've given them all marks out of 10 for availability, and not one of them is below a six. At first I thought they had actually managed it, because there's this constant flow of messages saying things like "when I got the head of accounts in the stationery cupboard" and "had the chairman's PA over his desk Thursday", but eventually I realised that it was all just fantasy.

And that's the problem: e-mail, it seems, is almost entirely fantasy. If you're talking over the ether, you can be the wit, the stud, the thrusting businessman you always wanted to be. No longer do people have to face the fact that their only suitor has a moustache like Genghis Khan and a voice like Ken Livingstone; on screen he's Arnold Schwarzenegger.

And everyone can pose as that guy who wins arguments. Sometimes I look around me, and I can tell who's having a row by the crashing of keys and the crazed use of the mouse as thoughts that would have come out five minutes too late in reality make their way to the top of the screen as though they'd dropped first from the brain. And meanwhile, as we enter the age of digital shopping, digital party rooms, our real social skills atrophy and die. If we're not careful, we'll soon be inadequate with grossly inflated opinions of our own value as raconteurs. A nation of anoraks. And then no one will want to go to parties any more.

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FINANCE

Whoops. Another £1m gone

Times are hard for local councils' own contractors. By Paul Gosling

Eighteen years after the first compulsory competitive tendering laws were introduced, many councils are still breaking the law by running losses on activities won against private-sector competition. Last month Cardiff City Council revealed that it had made a loss of £1m-plus last year in managing its housing stock, after a new computer system failed to monitor spending.

Also in July, the Secretary of State for Scotland, Donald Dewar, intervened to close down the works departments of North Lanarkshire and East Ayrshire councils, which were running deficits between them of more than £7m. In Lanarkshire, weak management had allowed 2,000 manual workers to earn more than £20,000 a year each; one plumber earned bonuses of £43,500 on top of his basic wage of £10,600.

Meanwhile, in Liverpool, there have been a series of financial failures by the council's works departments. This led last week to a crisis meeting between Hilary Armstrong, the local government minister, and Mike Storey, leader of Liverpool Council. The Government has instructed the council to close its grounds maintenance department and award the contract to the private sector. The council is asking for a period of grace to transfer its parks into the hands of newly formed trusts, to award maintenance contracts to commercial businesses.

This year 15 councils in England alone were told to take urgent action to stem losses on contracts awarded to in-house teams, usually called direct service organisations

(DSOs), or sometimes direct labour organisations (DLOs). Under compulsory competitive tendering (CCT) legislation – to be replaced by potentially stricter new Best Value laws – DSOs must break even after putting aside 6 per cent of costs as a capital financing charge.

The Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions argues that, with only 15 local authorities giving notice to put right failures this year – and with just eight of these given further directions for failing to make sufficient progress – this is an improvement. Last year, 31 councils failed to hit their financial targets.

The Association of Direct Labour Organisations agrees. Nick Walkley, ADLO's principal adviser for Best Value, says: "They are not in as bad a mess as they appear and it is resolvable. Things have gone wrong, but there is an opportunity for councils to put their own houses in order. Treatment of them has sometimes been heavy-handed. If you look at the number of DSOs in difficulty, it has gone down significantly over the last five or six years. There are a lot of good-performing DSOs: some can compete with the best of the private sector."

A different view is taken by their competitors. Cliff Davis-Coleman represents the Public Contractors' Association, and says: "DSOs are in this mess because the last government decided, for reasons best known to themselves, not to pursue them, and because these authorities, with the connivance of the Labour Party, were looking the other way. There is a certain irony that it is now a Labour government that is jumping all over them."

"It is going to create problems for

Best Value. That is why the Government is talking about creating regional performance indicators, because many of these services have never been properly subject to market testing, and therefore there are no real benchmarks to test them against. It will take five years before these things are sorted out."

"These problems are widespread. I would say that two-thirds of local government has not looked at the costs in their DSOs since 1988."

Mr Davis-Coleman believes that the traditionally close relationship between trade unions and the Labour Party has led Labour-controlled councils to feather-bed their works departments, protecting them against competition. However, it is not only in Labour councils where DSOs have performed badly.

Surrey County Council has been Conservative-controlled for most of its history, except for a short period recently when it had no overall control. Yet Surrey's DSO, called Surrey Operational Services, was found to be illegally cross-subsidising its loss-making grounds maintenance division from its profitable waste disposal division. The managing director of Surrey Operational Services, Norman Allison – who has since died – was found to have falsified accounting returns to the council for three years.

Mr Allison was arrested and subjected to a Serious Fraud Office investigation, which concluded that while he was guilty of improper accounting, it was not for personal gain, and that there was not sufficient evidence to prosecute him.

A report by Surrey's auditors, KPMG, concluded that the council would have saved £2m if it had externalised its rubbish disposal service, though this is disputed by the authority.

Since the crisis in its DSO, Surrey has carried out major organisational reforms. This led to its externalising the grounds maintenance operation to the contractors Sita UK, and its highways construction division to Balfour Beatty, and it will transfer out its waste disposal service to the private sector later this year when it lets out a 25-year contract, for which the DSO will

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Surrey council has concluded that the game is up for DSOs. A spokesman, Tim Edwards, says: "Public sector companies simply cannot compete. The private sector can cross-subsidise. The illegal practice conducted by Norman Allison was no more than he would have done legally in the private sector. But he ran it as if it was his own private company, and as a result discriminated a lot of legitimate DSOs."

The Association of Direct Labour Organisations, naturally enough, is less pessimistic. Nick Walkley, a spokesman, does agree though, that DSOs cannot compete evenly with private sector contractors. A recent government White Paper indicates that councils will be empowered to enforce contract compliance on contractors, preventing their winning work by employing staff on worse conditions of employment. But ADLO also wants the Government to permit DSOs to carry out work outside their own areas, which they are prevented by law from doing. ADLO says the Government is currently dithering on whether to implement this change.

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For an application pack, please send an Ad SAE to: Karen Eggleston, General Manager, Theatre Royal Bath, Sawclose, Bath BA1 1ET. For an informal discussion of the post, please contact the theatre's Director, Danny Moore on 01255 448815. The closing date for applications is Tuesday 18 August. First interviews will take place on Tuesday 25 August.

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29/8/98

Rachel Fixsen
concludes our
series on
financial
planning for
young people,
and finds that
it's never too
early to start

Flying the nest can be truly exhilarating. As long as you're armed with knowledge on how to manage practically, leaving home for the first time, and the new experiences that come with it, are something to look forward to. But getting knee-deep in credit card debt, or taken to court for unpaid bills, are experiences you can do without.

Many teenagers moving away to university are simply not aware of how to deal with their money, and are in danger of making mistakes. When, and how, should children learn about personal finance?

Schools could do more to help. The Personal Finance Education Group (PPEG), which includes financial companies, teachers, regulators and consumer groups, has been campaigning since December 1996 to get personal finance on to the National Curriculum.

Money matters should be integrated into subjects already taught, the group believes, rather than seen as a separate subject.

For example, 11-year-olds now being taught maths may be asked how many bricks they will need to build a house. Instead, PPEG would suggest a practical example: asking them how much money they would need to earn to pay off a loan taken out for a motorbike, including interest accrued over time.

The PPEG has worked out a 'Learning Framework for Personal Finance', which gives examples of activities teachers can use to bring money management into existing subjects. The framework sets out learning objectives from age five to age 16, and is already being tried out in 20 schools.

Being a good consumer of personal finance is the same as being a good consumer of any product, says Victoria Nye, director of training and education at the Association of Unit Trusts and Investment Funds, one of the bodies involved in the PPEG.

"You need to have the assertiveness to ask questions of anyone who's trying to sell you something," says Ms Nye. "You need the in-built cynicism that we all get with a certain amount of maturity."

NatWest runs a programme in conjunction with schools that is aimed at teaching 11-to-18-year-olds practical financial literacy and giving them advice on money matters. Half of all secondary schools in England and Wales have now registered with the bank's 'Face 2 Face With Finance' scheme.

Activities are set out under the programme, and bank employees visit the school. Teachers also have the opportunity to experience banks from the inside, by means of brief work placements.

There is a lot that parents can do, experts say. Simply being a role model by practising good money skills while your children are growing



Having fun as a teenager is much easier if you have money to spend

Bring them up as banking babies

ing up gives them a good start. Make sure you pay all your bills on time, avoid buying too much on credit, and shop around for expensive items.

"It's good to be introduced to the discipline of saving at an early age," says Gavin Haynes of the independent financial advisers Whitechurch Securities, in Bristol.

"Many of the major banks and building societies offer savings accounts with incentives that will interest children."

Abbey National offers its 'Action Saver' account for children up to the age of 15, which pays 3.6 per cent interest on balances over £1, and offers a gift pack and magazine as incentives. Halifax is targeting younger children with its 'Little Xtra Club' for under-nines, which offers

a range of free gifts. Club members could save their money in a Liquid Gold account, attracting 5.75 per cent gross annual interest from £1.

Parents should think about teaching their children early on about personal finance, says Victoria Nye. "You can start very gently with a child from an early age, by giving them games to play, such as a basic shopping game, and as they get older you can build that up," she suggests.

If the children get money from grandparents, they could have the challenge of finding a good bank account for it themselves. Show them that there is a wealth of information in personal finance pages of newspapers, advises Ms Nye.

Build up an awareness of stock

market investment, she says. If your child is interested in buying a certain CD player, for example, encourage them to notice which company manufactures them, and to ask whether that could be a good company to invest in.

Try tracking trading prices of group of stocks with your children over the summer holidays, Ms Nye suggests; though she does add: "If they'd been investing over these summer holidays they'd have lost a fortune, probably."

New students can find themselves in deep water if they lack basic money-management skills.

"Some of the research we've done shows that 16-to-18-year-olds just aren't prepared - they don't understand how much they'll be

paying for electricity bills, gas bills and council tax," says James Murray, of NatWest.

Parents should sit down with their children before they leave for university and tell them, for example, how the interest charges work if they get a credit card, and that if the bill is not paid in full on the date specified, charges will quickly begin to build up.

Learning how to budget is vital for new students, Mr Murray says.

And students-to-be should be told what to do if the worst happens and their finances do get out of control. "If you're at university and you start getting into money troubles, don't just hide the statements under the bed - go and see the bank manager," says Mr Murray.

If their building society will not look on them favourably, they have other avenues. They can try other credit card companies, who may charge less. They will have to make sure that the credit card company realises that they will be repaying their old debts, not adding to their indebtedness.

Another solution is to look at putting a second charge on the property, possibly via a bank loan. This would have the advantage of reducing the amount of interest and

spreading the payments over a longer period of time.

The psychology of debt is interesting. Someone who borrows money feels that the institution making the loan is doing them a great favour. I think it was Bob Hope who said something to the effect that "banks will lend me money only if I can prove that I don't need to borrow it".

Anyone in debt should remember that the money is being lent to them at a commercial rate, and that the lending institution is making a fair return on their "investment". Just a look at the annual rate of interest will show who is doing better out of the arrangement.

When restructuring debt, the important thing is to make sure that the restructuring is manageable. If it is simply perpetuating the downward spiral, there is not much point to it. Do so with the view that you are going to pay it off by a certain period of time.

When you have repaid the debt, make sure you put the money with which you have been servicing the debts into savings, so that you build up some money and avoid having to borrow in the future.

This type of work does not fall within the normal remit of an independent financial adviser. For those who advocate paying fees for advice, I wonder how they consider an IFA should be paid in this case. Any fee that I would have charged for the advice I gave would simply have put the sisters further into debt. Yet morally they are surely as entitled to advice as anyone else.

The key question is, who pays for this advice? Should other clients subsidise couples like them? It is not something that many people are prepared to do. Should the adviser work additional hours? That is not sustainable in the long term.

I find this circle difficult to square. It is often those in most need of advice who can least afford to pay for it.

Amanda Davidson is a partner at Holden Meehan independent financial advisers in London (0171-692 1700)

Virgin gets personal to PEP up pension plans

TWO THOUSAND Virgin Direct PEP investors recently received a letter from managing director Rowan Gormley, offering to transfer their PEP holdings into a Virgin Personal Pension without charge.

"There's a way you can increase the value of your savings by almost 30 per cent overnight," the letter reads. "Just transfer the value of your PEP into a Virgin Personal Pension. The Government is so keen to encourage you to save for your retirement, they're willing to hand out some great tax breaks."

Virgin has confirmed that some of its PEP investors have transferred funds to personal pension contracts after consulting the company's financial advisers, but insists that the campaign complied fully with regulatory criteria.

Gordon Maw, Virgin Direct's marketing manager, defends the initiative. "Everyone who responded to the letter has spoken to our fully qualified money managers," he says. "They spend anything up to an hour discussing the customer's objectives, retirement planning and the advantages and disadvantages of PEPs and personal pensions."

The Virgin campaign has provoked criticisms of superficiality from some competitors still feeling a little raw from the stigma of pension mis-selling and gob-smacked by another piece of Virgin chutzpah. On

the face of things, however, Virgin may have laid itself open to allegations of "misbuying".

The Virgin letter concentrates almost exclusively on the tax relief that attends pension contributions and does not attempt to distinguish between PEPs and personal pensions as savings instruments. But there are significant differences between the two types of contracts.

In essence, the pension is an authentic "life cycle" product. It designates a period of time for capital accumulation (a working life), in which the investor has no access to the capital or benefits, followed by a designated period of consumption (retirement), with a taxable income generated by an annuity, after extraction of a tax-free lump sum of up to 25 per cent of the fund. The quid pro quo for this restrictive process is generous tax relief in the accumulation phase of the cycle.

By contrast, the PEP is not a natural "life cycle" product. There is unrestricted access to the benefits at all times, and capital does not die with the investor. There is no tax relief on contributions, but benefits are available tax-free at any time.

The PEP was conceived as a tax-efficient vehicle for capital growth through equity investment. However, the 1994 budget widened the range of eligible assets to include corporate bonds, convertibles and pre-

ference shares. This paved the way for corporate bond PEPs, dedicated to generating tax-free income and so enabling the PEP to come into its own as a bona fide vehicle for retirement planning.

The decision to transfer PEP capital into a pension contract should clearly be based on wider

considerations than tax relief at the point of transfer. But there is no evidence of ulterior motives on the part of Virgin other than "best advice". Virgin will not be extracting additional charges, and its advisers are not remunerated by commission.

The broader question is whether the PEP can be an adequate sub-

stitute for the pension, given the latter's superior tax efficiency. Not surprisingly, it accumulates more capital than any PEP. On the income side, the outcome is murkier.

In our tables, the pension income is calculated by applying current annuity rates to the final pension fund and adjusting for income tax

paid. The PEP income is calculated by applying the current tax-free yield on the respective providers' corporate bond funds to the PEP capital amassed.

It would appear that single, basic-rate taxpayers (in retirement) are probably better off pursuing the conventional pension route. Married higher-rate taxpayers are likely to be the major beneficiaries of retirement planning through PEPs, especially as they enjoy superior capital access and the capital does not "die" when they do.

The scope for adopting the Virgin strategy is limited by reigning personal pension funding allowances. At present, the investor can make regular contributions up to an age-related percentage of "net relevant earnings".

In addition, the investor can pay in up to six years of "unused relief". Ge pension contributions that could have been paid but have not been. This defines the limit that can be transferred from the PEP to the pension. The Virgin proposition clearly favours older investors who have higher regular pension allowances.

Furthermore, the effect of one-off relief on the transfer is obviously more favourable the nearer the investor is to retirement.

One further caveat for anyone weighing up the merits of PEP and pension: on no account should the

annuity rate used in the pension illustration be taken at face value.

All pension providers use a common set of rates for projecting income, and these may not reflect the rates that are actually available on the open market. For example, the Virgin Personal Pension illustration uses a rate of 10 per cent annually for a male aged 60, whereas a more representative rate is 8.13 per cent. For a married couple (both aged 60) the situation is much worse. The going rate for a joint life annuity is only 5.8 per cent. Rates are currently falling.

The pension provider can legitimately argue that, for long-term pension projections, it is not possible to foresee interest rates and that a standardised set of annuity rates is the only option. Such anomalies are not exclusively the fault of providers. They also stand as a monument to a regulatory disclosure regime that seeks to inform investors by providing misleading information. *Caveat emptor!*

The Virgin proposal appears to favour:

- Single people;
- Higher-rate taxpayers now, who expect to be basic-rate taxpayers in retirement;
- Older investors (eg the over-50s);
- Those with comparatively few years to selected retirement age.

It's bold. It's controversial. But will an offer to move PEP holdings into a pension work, asks David Emery

CAPITAL ACCUMULATION					
Years	Male aged 35. Contribution of £100 p.m. (net of basic rate tax where applicable for 25 years)	Virgin PEP @9% p.a.	Virgin Growth PEP @9% p.a.	Perpetual PEP @9% p.a.	Fidelity PEP @9% p.a.
1	1,159	1,210	1,164	1,240	1,171
3	5,180	5,950	3,763	4,010	3,844
5	9,350	7,170	6,730	7,240	6,960
10	23,500	17,600	16,208	17,700	17,108
15	42,390	32,900	29,670	33,000	32,097
20	72,000	55,300	48,625	55,100	54,094
25	114,000	88,000	75,275	87,300	86,375

*£100 p.m. net of basic rate tax to the Personal Pension Plan equivalent to £129.67 p.m. gross

**Single Life annuity @ 8.13% p.a.

***Gross @ 6.53% p.a.

****Net of basic rate tax @ 5.571 p.a.

*****Net of higher rate tax @ 5.71 p.a.

*****Income calculated at current yields on Corporate Bond Funds

*****Annuity paid monthly in advance with 5% guarantee

*****Income calculated at current yields on Corporate Bond Funds

*****Annuity paid monthly in advance with 5% guarantee

*****Income calculated at current yields on Corporate Bond Funds

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Buying a house or flat is an important decision, so make sure you ask all the right questions and get the answers you need

Geoff Garrett

It pays to ask questions

A mortgage could be your biggest financial commitment. Andrew Couchman shows how to get the best deal

Buying a home, one of our largest financial commitments, is, for most, made possible only by borrowing money in the form of a mortgage. If you have a mortgage, here are 10 questions to ask your mortgage lender. Can I get a better deal? Many lenders offer their best deals only to their new customers. New borrowers enjoy discounts, cash back and other promotional deals but, as an existing borrower, you may get none of these. Most lenders will not tell you whether you could advantageously move to a better loan with them, so you will have to ask. Alternatively, you could switch to another lender. Switching can cost a lot in terms of legal fees, valuation and any early repayment fees charged by your existing lender (especially if your current scheme is at a fixed rate or enjoys a discount) so make sure you understand all the costs involved before considering such a move. What benefits do I get from being a customer? Many lenders' financial services companies have been slow to recognise the value of existing customers. Embarrass them by asking for a better deal. If they are customer-focused as they claim, such programmes will become more popular.

Can I borrow more in the future? You may not want a bigger mortgage now, but in the future money for a home extension, or school fees, can often be cheaper by adding to your mortgage rather than through a separate loan. Some lenders even build in automatic further advance options to their mortgages, but remember that the APR quoted in the adverts does not reflect which lender will be cheapest. **What is your track record on interest rates?** Unless your lender has recently changed ownership, their track record may give a good indication as to future likely competitiveness. Watch out for lenders slow to cut, but quick to raise, their interest rates. **Do you subscribe to the Mortgage Code?** This is a voluntary code of practice put together by the Council of Mortgage Lenders (CML) and the Mortgage Code Register of Intermediaries. You can get a copy from the CML, on 0171-440 2255. The code lays down agreed practices and standards. If you have a complaint, refer to the

rates. So, if your lender charges a higher property valuation fee, their effective rate of interest is also higher. Though a good idea in practice, the APR is both complex and, for many borrowers, meaningless. Instead, look at what you would pay up front and each month – you may find that the APR quoted in the adverts does not reflect which lender will be cheapest. **What is your track record on interest rates?** Unless your lender has recently changed ownership, their track record may give a good indication as to future likely competitiveness. Watch out for lenders slow to cut, but quick to raise, their interest rates. **Do you subscribe to the Mortgage Code?** This is a voluntary code of practice put together by the Council of Mortgage Lenders (CML) and the Mortgage Code Register of Intermediaries. You can get a copy from the CML, on 0171-440 2255. The code lays down agreed practices and standards. If you have a complaint, refer to the

code; it tells you what to do if your lender will not help. **Will my endowment policy still pay off my mortgage?** One in three people pay interest only to their mortgage lender and take out an endowment life policy to pay back the capital at the end of the mortgage. Declining with profit bonus rates in recent years may mean that some policies could show a shortfall on maturity. If your lender cannot answer your insured should be able to. If there may be a shortfall, it could make sense to pay more to your lender now each month rather than have an unwanted lump sum to pay off later. **Can I switch mortgage repayment method?** Even if you have an endowment policy that may fall short, do not stop it. Most policies have high initial charges, which fall away leaving lower annual charges. Make no change without getting professional advice first but, if you can afford it, consider switching to a repayment mort-

gage now, so you start to pay off some capital each month, but keep your endowment going. When it matures you should have enough to pay off the mortgage and a nice cash sum too. **What if I run into financial difficulties?** If the feared economic turnaround comes about, or you lose your job, split up with a partner or become ill or disabled, your mortgage payments could be under threat. As soon as that looks likely contact your mortgage lender immediately. Some are more sympathetic than others but most will genuinely try to help. At the least, they can set out all the options for you. Talk to your financial advisor too. The worst thing you can do is to say nothing in the hope that things will get better on their own. Chances are, they won't. If you want additional protection now, before you hit any problem, mortgage payment protection may be the answer. This pays your mortgage for up to a year if you become unemployed, or long term ill or disabled. It typically costs around £7 a month per £100 of mortgage payment protected and can be taken out with your mortgage or added later. Shop around to get the best deal.

Andy Couchman is publishing editor of *HealthCare Insurance Report*

You don't have to be well-heeled to get a Virgin Growth PEP, just fleet of foot.



Virgin Direct Personal Financial Service Ltd is regulated by the Personal Investment Authority. The price of units and any income from them can go down as well as up and you may not get back the amount you invest. The tax benefit depends on personal circumstances. You can invest in our general PEP right up until April 5 1999 when they will attract the same tax benefits as the new Individual Savings Account. All calls are recorded and monitored.

Free to own your flat

Buying your freehold is now easier with the help of LVTs. By Karen Woolfson

negotiate these hurdles well before the freehold has been purchased.

Leaseholders who have jointly bought their freehold over the past year have been encouraged by the way LVTs are handling the process. Two flat owners in north-west London with leases of 67 years put a price of £20,000 on the freehold, less than one-tenth of the landlord's valuation of £203,500. The LVT valued the freehold at £7,550, a cost of £33,825 for each flat owner.

However, while landlords have put forward less extortionate valuations the outcome has proved a genuine compromise on both sides. Four flat owners in Cardiff, for example, found the LVT determined a price of £5,800, which was a little closer to the landlord's valuation of £11,900 than their own, which was £1,800.

These outcomes indicate that LVTs are achieving their objective in establishing a fair cost for purchasing a freehold. If you want to buy the freehold as a group, known in property-speak as the right to "collectively enfranchise", the first step will be to find out whether other leaseholders in the block want to participate and if the building

qualifies for enfranchisement. To satisfy the criteria, flat owners must have a lease that was originally granted for more than 21 years, regardless of how many years are left on it. The lease may also have to be what is called a "low rent", which means that no rent was payable during the initial year and should not exceed £1,000 if the flat is in Greater London or £250 elsewhere. You must also check that you do not fall into the exclusio category, including those who have a business lease.

Flat owners must also have occupied the flat as their only or principal residence over the past 12 months or for periods amounting to three years over the past 10. The building must not be a cathedral precinct, a National Trust or a Crown property, must contain a minimum of two flats and no more than 10 per cent of the internal floor area can be non-residential or commercial use. In addition, you must ensure two-thirds of the leaseholders satisfy the criteria before proceeding to the next step. At least two-thirds of the qualifying flat owners must agree to participate in buying the freehold and the total number taking part must own at least half of the flats in the building.

It is worth contacting the Leasehold Advisory Service for advice and for their A-Z booklet on collective enfranchisement before initiating the process.

The Cost of Buying your Freehold or Extending your Lease is available from Leasehold Enfranchisement Limited, 33 St George's Drive, Pimlico, London SW1V 4DG, at a cost of £21. You are welcome to write to Karen Woolfson, Homebatties, c/o Nick Cicutt, The Independent, One Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL. Karen regrets that she is not able to reply personally to all letters.

Would an MP trust an MP?



NIC CICUTTI

'Ivana Trump would give the average fund manager a run for his money'

WE ARE meant to trust them to make all manner of decisions on our behalf, including financial ones. So how do MPs shape up when it comes to how they would look after their own money?

This was the subject of a survey of 35 Members of Parliament – from Labour, the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats – carried out by Virgin Direct, the financial services company, last month.

The results are intriguing. Almost half those polled, 15 out of 35, said they would buy a financial product directly from a company, ahead of those MPs who preferred to go to an independent financial adviser for help.

A further nine said they would talk to a bank, with one lone MP indicating that the first port of call would be a building society.

Perhaps the most

interesting answers came when MPs were asked which celebrity they would entrust to invest £1,000 of their money.

The "brown-nose tendency" won out on both sides of the House, with John Gunnell, Fraser Kemp and Dr Ashok Kumar, all Labour MPs, naming the Chancellor; Gordon Brown, as their choice.

One Liberal Democrat

appears to be wavering towards the governing party. Nick Palmer also opted for Gordon Brown, although it is hard to know whether Barry Gardiner, a Labour MP, was serious when he named his parliamentary colleague Geoffrey Robinson, Treasury Minister, as his financial minder.

On the other side,

Patrick Colvin,

Conservative MP, plumped for Francis Maude, the

Shadow Chancellor, as his

financial guru. Ken

Livingstone lived up to his

maverick reputation by

announcing he would hand over his £1,000 to "anyone except Gordon Brown".

Other MPs gave more

refreshingly bizarre

answers, with replies

ranging from Melinda

Messenger (Colin Breed,

Lib Dem); Ivana Trump

(Jane Griffiths, Labour);

Basil Brush (Michael

Moore, Lib Dem) and

Richard Wilson (Paul

Tyler, Lib Dem).

However, Rowan

Gormley, managing

director at Virgin Direct,

defends the strange choice

of some money managers

by MPs. He says:

"Whether you are

watching the pennies or

playing the markets,

saving money allows you

to plan a secure financial

future. Judging by their

own money making skills,

I suspect the likes of

Melinda Messenger and

Ivana Trump would give

the average fund manager

a run for their money."

SAVE MONEY THE MP'S WAY

MPs on their favourite money-saving hints:

"Don't buy National Lottery tickets." Paul Goggins, Wythenshaw & Sale East

"I'm still trying to find one that works." Nick Palmer, Braxhoe

"Minimise your use of energy; wasted energy is money burnt." Lembit Opik, Montgomeryshire

"Leave before it's your round in the pub." Richard Allan, Sheffield

French kissing.

There are hundreds of reasons to take a day-trip to Paris this August, but only one way to do it. Call Eurostar now or just turn up and go.

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NEW FILMS

THE ADVENTURES OF ROBIN HOOD (U)

Director: Michael Curtiz
Starring: Errol Flynn, Olivia de Havilland, Basil Rathbone
A perfect antidote to the bombast of *Armageddon* can be found in Curtiz's merry and inventive romp, one of the greatest swashbucklers ever made. Graceful fighting sequences, Enrich Wolfgang Koenig's Oscar-winning soundtrack, jazzy pacing and a general air of *jolie de vivre* make it the most enticing family film on show this summer.
CW: *Barbican Screen, Curzon Mayfair, Screen on the Green, UCI Whitley, Virgin Chelsea, Virgin Fulham Road*

ARMAGEDDON (12)

Director: Michael Bay
Starring: Bruce Willis, Ben Affleck, Liv Tyler, Billy Bob Thornton
This deeply stupid film purports to be a tender love story, a meaty action-adventure and a global disaster movie, with almost every moment carefully engineered to include something for all the family. Dad will enjoy the gruff camaraderie of the deep-core drillers dispatched to sabotage the course of a meteor heading for Earth, while the love of the chief driller, Harry Stamper (Bruce Willis), for his daughter, Grace (Liv Tyler), should please Mum. Candy-coated exchanges between Grace and her fiance, AJ (Ben Affleck), will keep Big Sister reel, and Kid Brother is sure to be thrilled whenever a burning car sells through a skid.

Director Michael Bay's picture has a problem with the complexities of identity, and not only in terms of its audience profile. In *Armageddon*, the world's countries are acknowledged - and the world apparently only poses a threat to a stretch of motorway and some desirable beachfront properties. But is being represented by crude picture-postcard tableaux no better than not being represented at all?

This whole end-of-the-world nonsense turns out to be simply a preamble to Grace and AJ's wedding, though in all the excitement, everyone seems to have forgotten France being wiped out in the final reel. We are supposed to be soothed by the fact that AJ has survived, but as a substitution for 2,000 years of culture and history, I am not sure he really cuts it.

CW: ABC Tottenham Court Road, Barbican Screen, Clapham Picture House, Elephant & Castle Coronet, Hammersmith Virgin, Notting Hill, Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Leicester Square, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Rio Cinema, UCI Whitley, Virgin Chelsea, Virgin Fulham Road

TO HAVE AND TO HOLD (18)

Director: John Hillcoat
Starring: Tchéky Karyo, Rachel Griffiths
Nick Cave was one of the musical consultants on this heady melodrama, and indeed the whole film feels like one of his own murder ballads stretched out for two hours. Actually, it is the work of John Hillcoat, who made the intense prison drama, *Ghosts... of the Civil Dead*, but here throws together too many over-heated clichés to form a kind of low-rent Vertigo, with Tchéky Karyo remaking his lover, Rachel Griffiths, in the image of his former wife.

CW: ABC Piccadilly, Metro

ZERO EFFECT (15)

Director: Jake Kasdan
Starring: Bill Pullman, Ben Stiller, Ryan O'Neal
Kasdan is a 22-year-old following in the footsteps of his writer-director father, Lawrence (The Big Chill, *Grand Canyon*), demonstrating some of the same flaws as Dad (incongruous use of symbols, over-reliance on irony), but generally pulling off an impressive debut. Pullman is excellent as Daryl Zero, the world's greatest private investigator, a drop-out who subsists on tuna fish, Tab and amphetamines, pulling on reserves of wit and ingenuity when the time comes to crack a new case. And when Pullman gets to play scenes with Stiller, who plays Zero's well-groomed go-between, it is like watching a fireworks display - this pair crackles. Ultimately, the film feels a little shallow and self-conscious, but it puts a smile on your face for most of its duration.

CW: Odeon Camden Town, Virgin Haymarket, Warner Village West End

Ryan Gilbey

GENERAL RELEASE

BARNEY'S GREAT ADVENTURE (U)

Feature-length exploits for the big, jolly dinosaur. Ideal for the more undemanding pre-school viewer - but an endurance test for anyone else. CW: Clapham Picture House, UCI Whitley, Virgin Chelsea, Virgin Trocadero

THE CASTLE (12)

See *The Independent Recommends*, above right. CW: Clapham Picture House, Empire Leicester Square, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Swiss Cottage, UCI Whitley, Virgin Fulham Road, Virgin Trocadero

DANCE OF THE WIND (U)

Indian TV star Kiku Giridwani plays Pallavi, a singer of Hindustani classical music, who dries up on stage following the death of her mother. CW: Virgin Notting Hill, Renoir

THE DAYTRIPERS (15)

When Eliza (Dove Cameron) tells her parents that she thinks that her husband is having an affair, the whole family joins her on a road trip to Manhattan to confront him. First-time writer-director Greg Mottola charts the tensions of the family car journey with unerring wit and unexpected compassion. CW: Curzon Minima, Odeon Camden Town, Phoenix Cinema, Richmond Filmhouse, Ritzy Cinema, Virgin Whitley, Virgin Fulham Road, Virgin Trocadero, Warner Village West End

DR DOLITTLE (PG)

See *The Independent Recommends*, above right. CW: ABC Baker Street, ABC Tottenham Court Road, Clapham Picture House, Elephant & Castle Coronet, Hammersmith Virgin, Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Plaza, Ritzy Cinema, UCI Whitley, Virgin Fulham Road, Virgin Trocadero, Warner Village West End

THE GINGERBREAD MAN (15)

The routine level of so much of what takes place in *The Gingerbread Man* disappoints on every front. Robert Altman is a great director but with this film he is merely marking time. CW: ABC Shaftesbury Avenue, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Plaza, Ritzy Cinema, UCI Whitley, Virgin Chelsea, Virgin Fulham Road, Virgin Trocadero, Warner Village West End

GODZILLA (PG)

The team which cooked up such blockbusters as *Star Wars* and *Independence Day* is generally very adept at constructing enjoyable adventures. Unfortunately on this occasion their light touch has deserted them. CW: Empire Leicester Square, Hammersmith Virgin, Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Plaza, Ritzy Cinema, UCI Whitley, Virgin Fulham Road

LA GRANDE ILLUSION (U)

Jean Renoir's reissued 1937 classic is the tenderest of war movies. CW: ABC Swiss Centre, Screen on the Hill

GREASE (20TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION) (PG)
Twentieth-anniversary reissue of the nostalgic musical which is most notable for John Travolta as the greased-up high-school heart-breaker. CW: Odeon Mezzanine, Virgin Chelsea, Virgin Trocadero, Warner Village West End

HANA-BI (18)

Violent yet elegiac portrait of a brutal Japanese policeman who is pushed over the edge by his traumatic personal life. CW: ABC his Trauma, Shaftesbury Avenue, Gate Notting Hill, Metro, Ritzy Cinema

THE LITTLE MERMAID (U)

This sprightly adaptation of Hans Christian Andersen's story - rereleased in time for the summer holidays - began a string of hits for summer jazzy holiday fare. CW: Odeon Disney, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Swiss Kensington, Odeon Whitley, Virgin Trocadero, Warner Village West End

LOST IN SPACE (1960s)
Yet another cult 1960s television series gets an expensive makeover, but the film-makers have remained faithful to the original tone

and the movie looks terrific. William Hurt stars as a frosty scientist who journeys with his family into space to save the Earth from destruction and, of course, learns how to bond with his kids in the process. CW: ABC Tottenham Court Road, Clapham Picture House, Elephant & Castle Coronet, Hammersmith Virgin, Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Plaza, Ritzy Cinema, Screen on the Green, UCI Whitley, Virgin Chelsea, Virgin Fulham Road

LOVE AND DEATH ON LONG ISLAND (15)

A warm, subtle comedy starring John Hurt and Jason Priestley. CW: Curzon Minima, Virgin Haymarket

MAD CITY (15)

A despicably simplistic drama in which Dustin Hoffman's weasely reporter chances upon a hostage situation in a museum, where disgruntled ex-employee John Travolta has produced a gun in an effort to get his old job back. CW: Virgin Trocadero, Warner Village West End

THE MAGIC SWORD: QUEST FOR CAMELOT (U)

The first full-length product of Warner's new animation division, this Arthurian adventure looks and sounds even cheerier than the average Disney effort. But beneath the surface there is an edge of genuine weirdness that will keep parents entertained. CW: Hammersmith Virgin, Odeon Swiss Cottage, UCI Whitley, Virgin Chelsea, Virgin Fulham Road, Virgin Trocadero, Warner Village West End

MOJO (15)

Mojo is set in a mythologised 1950s Soho inhabited by petty gangsters. It concentrates on sexual tension in a way which American crime movies generally shy away from. CW: ABC Swiss Centre

MONK DAWSON (18)

A sensitive Catholic priest succumbs to temptation, loses his faith and takes to the party circuit. You can just about discern the honourable intentions hiding within Monk Dawson, but far better to enjoy the film for the hotch-potch of melodrama and sensationalism that it is. CW: Virgin Haymarket

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WEDNESDAY TELEVISION

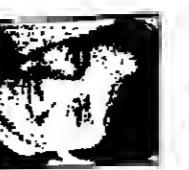
THE WEDNESDAY REVIEW
The Independent 12 August 1998

National centre
house danger

BBC1

THOMAS SUTCLIFFE

TELEVISION REVIEW



FOR EVERY SIX people who

will successfully reach the summit of Everest, one person will die. This is not a mere kind of tourist tax, just the current ratio of triumph to disaster, and it doesn't really help you calculate your odds. You might hit a peaceful stretch rather than one of the bouldering routes which do so much to maintain the mountaineers' battling figures. All the same, it's the sort of statistic which would give you pause for thought as you, for the first time, up through the Khumbu Icefall. Everest base camp now looks like Glastonbury with bouldering, someone in that Corfe-crowd is for it.

Unluckily, pausing for survival chance much once you've up there, because, as the Equator line about high altitude physiology remitted you, the brain can become as starved of oxygen as the muscles, which is why it's not even permanent. Some work indicates that climbers who go to extreme altitude without oxygen do come back with smaller brains," said a Seattle white-coat, briefing the members of a special expedition set up to study the effects of hypoxia. Regular high-altitude climbers, he explained, suffer from subtle cognitive dysfunction which can only be detected by psychometric testing.

As someone who becomes anxious if the usual sites are pumped too high, I would have thought the cognitive distinction was blindingly obvious from the fact that they want to climb Everest in the first place. Surely some error of perception here - the smaller brains must be the cause not an effect. And if you think this is just a callow line of bravado, even they agree: "It only makes me question my sanity as to why I climbed this mountain again," said one expedition member, returning from his fourth summit.

Another man who had spent much of the climb cataloguing the exotic varieties of mucus he was expelling from his tortured lungs ("last night I coughed up a lot of green nuclear sludge") and who very ready died on the descent, made an open plea for his friends to intervene should he ever mention doing it again. The science itself was distinctly underwhelming - at various altitudes they jumped

cognitive hurdles (some of which I couldn't manage at sea-level) becoming more inconspicuous as exhaustion and hypoxia starved the brain. This appears to prove what everyone knew already - the brain needs oxygen and there's less of it up there. But the medical research was really just an alibi - partly for the adventurers who wanted another crack at the mountain, partly for Everest itself, which would give you pause for thought as you, for the first time, up through the Khumbu Icefall. Everest base camp now looks like Glastonbury with bouldering, someone in that Corfe-crowd is for it.

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BBC2

ITV Carlton

Channel 4

Channel 5

ITV

ITV

ITV

BBC1

ITV Carlton

Channel 4

Channel 5

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